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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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APRIL 6, 1992

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CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs. Trilling

To the editors:

I am writing to correct some errors in Alan Mintz's review of Susanne Klingenstein's *Jews in the American Academy, 1900-1940* ("Manners, Morals, and the Academy," March 9). I should perhaps point out that I am not purporting to choose between his and Ms. Klingenstein's views on Lionel Trilling as a Jewish writer. I have not yet seen Ms. Klingenstein's book.

1. Mr. Mintz writes that Lionel Trilling's mother came "from Vienna via London." There was no Vienna in Lionel's mother's background. She was born in London; her parents had emigrated from Russian Poland to England.

2. Mr. Mintz writes: "The Trilling household was kosher, the mother lit Sabbath candles, the father required his son to put on tefillin and say daily prayers through high school." Lionel's mother did keep a kosher kitchen and she did light Sabbath candles, but this does not mean—as Mr. Mintz seems to be saying—that Lionel was brought up in a religious household. His parents were only moderately observant even at home and outside their home they were not observant at all—they ate in non-kosher homes, including those of both Lionel and his sister. Away from his own table, Lionel's father happily ate shellfish.

I never heard from Lionel that he was required by his father to say daily prayers through high school. In the light of his father's heterodoxy, this appears to me to be unlikely. But Mr. Mintz perhaps has evidence for his statement that I do not have. If so, I would appreciate his sharing it with me so that I can include it in my own forthcoming book about my husband.

3. "When he entered Columbia as an undergraduate," Mr. Mintz writes, "Trilling let this Jewish culture fall from his shoulders rather effortlessly. He neither indicted it nor rebelled against it, he merely moved on to other concerns." Insofar as it implies, as it unquestionably does, that Lionel was making an accommodation, even a capitulation, to Gentile Columbia, I find this statement offensive as well as a misreading of the family situation. There was no great cultural gulf that Lionel had to bridge between his home and Columbia. He was indeed brought up as a Jew but English, well-spoken, was the language of the household and both of his parents were book readers, especially his mother. Lionel's mother, Fannie Cohen, read Dickens, Balzac, Dostoevsky, Henry James, all books in the Western humanistic tradition, which was the Columbia tradition. Jewish culture was not the dominant culture of Lionel's home which, on entering Columbia, he had to let fall from his shoulders with or without effort.

4. Quoting Ms. Klingenstein, Mr. Mintz speaks of "qualities and values" that were "developed as much in the Trilling household with its kosher kitchen and in argument with Max Kadushin as in the reading of novels." It is doubtful that Lionel ever argued with Max Kadushin. When he knew Kadushin, Lionel was a little boy of 12 or 13 being taught Hebrew in preparation for his Bar Mitzvah. Max Kadushin never became a familiar of the Trilling household.

A final point which can also, I suppose, be taken as a correction of error. I find it strange that in Mr. Mintz's extended discussion of Lionel Trilling as a Jewish writer, he makes no mention of Trilling's association with the *Menorah Journal.* This was the magazine in which Lionel himself and most of his Columbia literary friends were first published and the magazine in which he published all his early fiction. He began writing for it as a Columbia undergraduate, and in the first year of our marriage he was employed at the *Menorah Journal* as an assistant editor. Surely no one can properly write about Lionel as a Jew or even about Lionel as a young writer without close examination of his work for that magazine.

DIANA TRILLING
New York, New York

Alan Mintz replies:

Diana Trilling's corrections serve to strengthen my criticism of Susanne Klingenstein's claims for Lionel Trilling's Jewish intellectual inheritance. It seems that Klingenstein skates on even thinner ice than I imagined when she presents the Trilling family home as observant of many of the forms of Judaism. I assumed that in a book published by a prestigious university press one could take the straightforward presentation of biographical facts—if not their interpretation—at face value; I was apparently mistaken.

As to the *Menorah Journal,* I must confess to being unaware of Trilling's editorial role, and I agree that this aspect of his participation needs more investigation. In the many reviews he wrote for the journal, however, I find little evidence of a concern with Jewish themes.

Brown-nosing

To the editors:

I am neither a Jerry Brown supporter nor a California native. Nevertheless, as a critic of professional politics, I understand that Brown's message is not about the death of politics, as Sidney Blumenthal suggests ("Brownian Motion," March 2), but about its rebirth.

Brown isn't an advocate of individual disconnection from politics; he advocates overturning politics as usual. Unlike almost every other candidate in the race, Brown believes in the primacy of political life and its intrinsic rewards. Like so many Americans, including some TNR writers, Brown disdains the corrupting ordinariness of politicking in America.

There might be a better messenger, but the message is not anti-political. Brown is Jefferson to the creeping Hamiltonianism of Bush, Clinton, and Tsongas. His message seeks to recover American political life; re-establish its fluidity; re-center the gravity of political power; restore the wisdom of the body politic to the art of governing; and redeem the tripartite promise of democracy so eloquently expressed in the final line of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

MARK P. PETRACCA
Irvine, California

Oversexed

To the editors:

The alternative to aborting a fetus that is unwanted because of its sex is giving birth to a child that is unwanted because of its sex ("Boys Only" by Charlotte Allen, March 9). The dilemma is not why women choose to end pregnancies, but why people have children. Preference for one sex over another in childbirth is common. Some of the results of this are that families with two children of the same sex are more likely to have a third child than are families with a girl and a boy. People seem to prefer to adopt girls over boys, while it also appears that girls are more likely to be relinquished for adoption. The age of every child being loved and wanted just for being him or her self is not yet upon us. The value of a ban on abortion for reasons of sex selection, or of moral condemnation of that practice, in getting us to that point is not readily apparent.

The impetus to craft state legislation banning abortion for reasons of sex selection came from the National Right to Life Committee, an organization not known for its concern about women's lives and rights. The point of this ban was to push state law as far as the Court would allow in establishing government control over women's reproductive decisions and ending safe, legal abortion. It is no surprise that it was adopted by the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Our male-dominated state legislature has a history of disregard for women's well-being.

Allen does not specify the harmful

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consequences that she speculates could result from those abortions that we suspect may be for reasons of sex selection. Nor does she explain how state control of women's reproductive decisions would be better than allowing women to make their own decisions. The refusal of feminists and, especially, of abortion providers and other medical professionals to discourage or encourage abortion based on these considerations is ethical and consistent with respect for women's rights. When we acknowledge the importance of motherhood, the significance of pregnancy, and the moral competence of each individual, we accept that each woman has the right to continue or to terminate a pregnancy for her own reasons—even reasons that seem frivolous or unwise to others.

ELIZABETH HRENDA-ROBERTS
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

The writer is executive director of Planned Parenthood, Pennsylvania.

To the editors:

It is easy to list a number of criteria that we all might be horrified to find someone use as an impetus to abort a fetus. Killing females would certainly top my list. However, before making self-righteous calls for laws banning such practices, I would ask proponents to list the criteria they would use to justify having children. How many such lists include saving a marriage, improving self-esteem, or pleasing a parent, rabbi, or imam? The number of unwanted and abused children is so much larger than the number of aborted female fetuses that it makes a discussion of the latter problem almost trivial.

Few people argue that abortion is a wonderful thing. But just as few anti-choice advocates are willing to address the social problems that make abortion necessary. If parents were less interested in re-creating their bigoted selves and more interested in caring for the young, then perhaps no one would be seeking genetic screening in the first place.

CURTIS L. COLE
New York, New York

Blind ambition

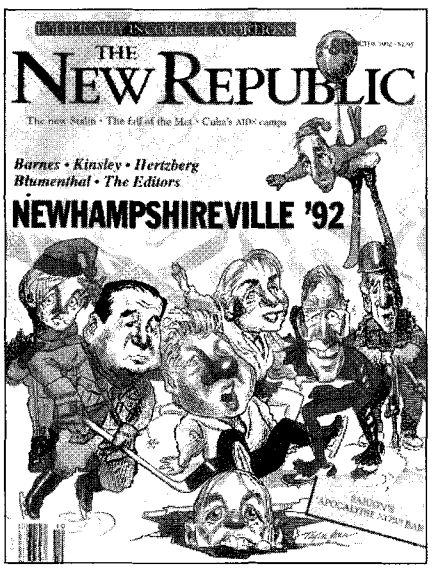
To the editors:

In his March 9 TRB ("Colonel of Truth"), Michael Kinsley comments that "someone like Bill Bradley seems to think he should be selected for the presidency by a distinguished panel of fellows." I gather that Kinsley disapproves of that, so may I remind him that it is just what the Founding Fathers originally intended?

While it may be fitting and proper for an individual to seek national leadership, it may also be a bit unseemly for him to seek the specific office of president. In prior eras, candidates were able to maintain an illusion of responding to the entreaty of their peers, but in recent years the press has tended to regard naked ambition (transmuted to "fire in the belly") as an essential qualification.

I think that what we are discovering is that, under such conditions, the best people do not choose to debase themselves by running. Rather than berate them for this, you might try to figure out how to change our procedures so that we can stop getting the presidential candidates we deserve and instead get the ones we need.

WILLIAM A. BAKER
Bloomfield, New Jersey



Buchanan's cross

To the editors:

I much appreciated Leon Wieseltier's riposte to Michael Kinsley on the issue of Pat Buchanan and anti-Semitism (Washington Diarist, "Pat and Mike," March 2). The effect of the article was dampened, however, by Wieseltier's closing lines, "He [Buchanan] holds his cross. Don't hold your fire." To me the reference to Buchanan holding his cross is offensive and smacks of anti-Christianism. I'll admit that this literary conceit presented a hard temptation to resist. But it should have been resisted, because it blunts the force of the article's main point, which is that prejudice does not need to be blatant but often reveals itself in subtle symbols.

The cross should no more be used as a symbol for the alleged sins of Christians than the Star of David as a symbol for the alleged sins of Jews. Both are symbols for that in us which seeks to rise above prejudice. Whatever he may say about his Jesuit schooling, Pat Buchanan is no religious figure and does not "hold his cross" more than any other run-of-the-mill Christian. Those of us who are Christian, and who have been appalled all our lives by Christians and others who exhibit conscious and unconscious anti-Semitism, find it helpful to remember that the cross, however else we may interpret it, in fact commemorates the death of a Jew whom the Roman governor had killed because he thought him dispensable.

EUGENE V. TOZZI
New Rochelle, New York

Leon Wieseltier replies:

I agree that the crack was a little low, but it was emotionally satisfying. Buchanan would understand.

Middlebrow

To the editors:

I had not yet read the March 9 issue when I got a call at my office from a friend (B.A. English, now a lawyer and relentless reader) in San Francisco. "Page 7," she says. "'Buchanan's poujadism.' What the hell is 'poujadism'?"

I called my wife, who *had* read the issue, and she said, "Oh yes, I noticed that too. I haven't the slightest idea." My wife is a two-book-a-week reader and actually even reads the entire *Atlantic* every month, a feat I cannot match.

I called Bruce Thornton (professor of Classics, Fresno State, world class pedant). He had read the editorial ("Special Olympics"). "Yeah, I noticed that. I have no idea. Hang on a minute." I hung on, hearing pages flipping in the background. "Nope, can't find anything in the reference books."

So at lunch I went home and looked through my own reference books (value when new: $15,000). Nothing. Now I must ask. Is this a neologism or coining? Is it a reference to a person? Is it an aspect of feudal government in India delivered to English by the Brits? And, finally, what is the writer doing using a term that four devoted readers with years of education don't recognize?

Harumph.

KELLY LEWIS
Fresno, California

To the editors:

Bushism of the Week Not Uttered by Bush:

"While it may not recommend Clinton as a human being, it is surely a virtue in a candidate." —The editors of TNR explaining why Bill Clinton's "unnerving drive" (born of a character "at once smarmy and sincere, calculating and naive, unable to discern the difference between his own and the public's good") is a good thing.

JOE CUOMO
Flushing, New York

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FROM WASHINGTON

Oh, grow up

One of the most entertaining things about the news is its arbitrariness. When is some story a huge outrage worthy of screaming headlines on page 1, and when does it deserve burial on page 23? Just lately *The Washington Post*, like every other news medium, has been giving the screaming page-one treatment to the story of rubber checks at the so-called House Bank. But just two years ago the same newspaper thought the same story was worth page 23.

On February 7, 1990, the General Accounting Office, Congress's investigative arm, released a report on the House Bank. The *Post* reported it the next day. That article, by Walter Pincus, contained all the major elements of today's scandal: the existence of a special "bank" where House members' pay was deposited; the fact that members could overdraw their accounts without penalty; the fact that many members were abusing this privilege.

A search through Nexis, the computerized media data base, indicates that only one other newspaper, the *Los Angeles Times*, picked up this story—running it two months late, April 8, on page 11. Last week the *Times* editorialized indignantly about "politicians being out of touch with commonsense principles." *The Miami Herald*, which surely has access to *The Washington Post* wire service, and which huffed last week about "justified public outrage" at congressional check kiting, ignored the story completely two years ago. So did all the radio talk show hosts who are now up in arms, some of whom must have seen it even on page 11 or 23.

Even before 1990 the House Bank was no secret. *Roll Call*, the Capitol Hill newspaper, reported in 1988 that some freshman senators, envying the "efficiency" (!) of the House side, wanted a bank of their own where "members who overdraw their accounts are not penalized." According to last week's House ethics committee report on the bank scandal, the GAO complained in 1954 that "some members frequently overdraw their accounts, sometimes in excess of their monthly salary and expenses ... and one-third of all active members" were in arrears during one typical period. The GAO has issued regular reports to Congress on the workings of the House Bank, and these reports have been public since 1977. These reports show that more bad checks were written in the 1960s and 1970s than in recent years.

Of course the Republican politicians now waxing self-righteous about the bank's casual practices did not need GAO reports to know all about them long ago. Minority Whip Newt Gingrich shamelessly compares himself to Vaclav Havel for having the courage to challenge the House leadership on this, although he himself has admitted to twenty or more bad checks. These admissions by Republican miscreants are based on their own records, not on information supplied by investigators. So no one hid their own bad checks from them, as they try to imply.

The fact that the abuse was widely known for years may indeed reflect poorly on the Democratic leadership. But what does that same fact say about the sincerity of Gingrich's present outrage? It's a funny kind of "scandal" that has been public knowledge for years if not decades. The shock the politicians and propagandists claim to feel is strictly of the Captain Renault variety.

This "bank" was really just a pot of money consisting mainly of House members' salary payments. The money sat there, interest-free, until a member withdrew it. There was an open, if not official, policy that members could draw up to a month's salary in advance; but the money came from the pot, not from the taxpayers. The members overall have been in surplus continuously since 1947. In fact the biggest beneficiary of this curious arrangement was the U.S. Treasury. It got the float on House members' salaries that otherwise would have been deposited in real, interest-paying banks a lot sooner.

This is not meant to absolve Congress completely. The bank's operation was an embarrassing, amateurish mess. Speaker Tom Foley badly bungled the cleanup operation. There were some real abusers of the overdraw privilege. And some may even be criminals—if, for example, they used their free loans to pay for election campaigns (as Gingrich characteristically has been implying without evidence). Furthermore, it is hard not to take some pleasure in seeing your typical congressman—who lives for re-election and who figures he's thought of everything—being hit with this unexpected pie in the face.

But if a tidal wave of public revulsion sweeps a third of Congress out of office over *this*, as some are predicting, you've got to wonder about the seriousness of the American electorate. It's not that most members of Congress deserve the virtually automatic re-election prospects they traditionally enjoy. Quite the opposite. It's that there are so many good reasons to vote against the typical incumbent politician (including those in the executive branch).

What serious citizen tolerates a $400 billion deficit but draws the line at a $400 rubber check? If 125 members of Congress were voted out over their failure to enact a capital gains tax cut, or over too much foreign aid, that would be a mistaken but responsible exercise in democracy. If a similar massacre occurs over the House Bank, that will be a joke.

Or is the House Bank "symbolic"—a "metaphor" for something larger, such as out-of-control government spending? That is the justification of those who are busy fanning the flames of public outrage. That is always the justification invoked by the promoters of our increasingly symbolic politics. Whether the trivial, irrelevant, or wholly concocted issue is the Pledge of Allegiance or prison furloughs or rubber checks or whatever comes next, there is always a fancy metaphorical explanation available on demand. Meanwhile the hard, genuine issues of politics are evaded.

Even now, rich Washington-based political consultants of both parties are plotting how they will use the check-kiting scandal as an anti-Washington theme in next fall's campaigns. The manipulators of this issue are more a part of the insular "Beltway" culture than their victims, and the issue itself is more of an "inside the Beltway" phenomenon than the vice it purports to attack. Of all the inhabitants of the "inside the Beltway" culture, members of Congress as a group are probably the least affluent, the least coddled, and the least isolated from life outside the magic circle.

It's hard to go against the tide on an issue like this one without getting branded an elitist and being told that you "just don't get it"—in the reigning political cliché of the season. Check bouncing, you get told, is something ordinary people can relate to. This, it seems to me, is the more elitist position: that ordinary folks need to be spoon-fed mock issues because they can't handle the real ones. The truly democratic position is to say to your fellow citizens: Get serious. Grow up.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

APRIL 6, 1992

WILL HE DO?

With his victories in Illinois and Michigan, it's now close to certain that Bill Clinton will be the Democratic candidate for president. Now comes the real test. Will he remain faithful to the reformed liberal ideas he's worked out over the last decade? Or will Clinton, like Carter, Mondale, and Dukakis before him, spend the months between now and the convention coddling the organized special interests that have held the party captive and helped it to defeat in election after election?

Clinton at times displays symptoms of Sudden Pandering Syndrome. His ability to reconcile opposites, to charm everyone while confronting no one, breeds a mixture of passive ogling and simultaneous mistrust on the part of voters. Is this the Clinton who, in Arkansas, faced down interest groups on occasion, including unions that helped elect and re-elect him? Despite his slipperiness, Clinton has shown the occasional glint of policy spine this year (see "Greaseman" by Morton Kondracke, page 19). If he shows more of it, he'll be a stronger candidate against a jelloid George Bush this fall. If not, he'll be the latest in a series of terminal Democratic tacticians. Here's where to keep an eye on him.

Welfare Reform. In an address at Georgetown University last fall, Clinton committed himself to limiting welfare recipients to two years on the dole, after which they'd have to take last resort government jobs. He has had even more success with this line among Southern blacks than among whites, which makes welfare reform a potent weapon against Republican race-baiting this time around. But does he mean it? According to a recent *New York Times* article, Clinton now says he would let welfare recipients stay in education programs—and on the dole—for more than two years. If recipients refused to work, they would apparently see their checks reduced but not eliminated. Clinton has also said recently that a government jobs program is unaffordable. One reason for his backtracking may be the endorsement he has received from the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees; public employee unions reflexively oppose government jobs programs as a threat to their wages and benefits. So what *is* Clinton's plan? Vague talk about "personal responsibility" may be uplifting, but it's hardly an answer.

The Deficit. Real welfare reform will cost $30 billion a year or more. Clinton's national service plan is also costly, as is his health care plan. And Clinton says he wants to cut the $400 billion deficit in order to quit compromising America's future. Where's the money to come from? Cutting defense, raising taxes on the rich, and trimming administrative waste and fraud won't do the trick. The only honest answer is to cut ballooning federal entitlements. In the past, Clinton has argued for taxing Medicare benefits. In a recent *Time* interview, he made a foggy comment about raising taxes on upper-income Social Security recipients. But just before the Florida primary, Clinton resorted to demagoguery against Paul Tsongas on the subject of reducing Social Security COLAs. It may be too much to ask that a candidate for president tell the public the unvarnished truth about the need to cut Social Security. But Clinton won't be able to touch entitlements (and therefore cut the deficit) once elected unless he wins a mandate to do so from the electorate.

Foreign Policy. Last year Clinton spoke strongly of the need to help demilitarize the former Soviet Union and to help build a new civil society. But foreign aid of any kind is risky politics in this election year, and Clinton has been suddenly laggard in endorsing a ruble stabilization fund, which is the form of aid Russia needs most desperately. He has also shown a lamentable instinct to refer to the "peace dividend" when saying how he will pay for domestic renewal, as if a credible foreign policy were merely a means to frame a domestic one. This is Bushism. Though he lacks the experience, Clinton has the intelligence to formulate a clear strategy for American engagement in the post-cold war world. But first he has to concede that foreign policy is an important part of what presidents do. So far, he's mumbling.

This, of course, may be the hold-your-nose stage of the campaign. Candidates seldom run on the unpopular portions of their platform. But the magnitude of Clinton's smoothness is a little alarming, and his only sporadic ability to take brave positions is a disappointment. A tougher policy posture could reveal the steel he personally sometimes lacks and could cast an even stronger light on George Bush's principle-free politics. Tsongas has shown that the rhetoric of sacrifice is not anathema to electoral success: it is, in fact, what many voters are looking for. 1992 may be a window year for real reform in this country. We'll see in the coming months if Bill Clinton has the backbone to take advantage of it. •

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NOTEBOOK

BUSHISM OF THE WEEK: "Total mistake—policy, political, everything else.... Policy because it simply did not do what I thought—hoped it would do: control this—control—get this economy moving. There were some good things about it, so I can't say—shouldn't say—total mistake. But it was—spending caps is good, getting the spending caps is good, keeping the government going as opposed to shutting down for whatever number of days it would have taken—that was good. But when you have to weigh a decision, in retrospect—have the benefit of hindsight—I would say both policy and politically, I think we can all agree that it's drawn a lot of fire." —March 11, on the 1990 budget agreement

BLACK HOLE OF THE S&Ls:

Mother Teresa Writes Letter for Keating

—*L.A. Daily Journal,* March 11
(thanks to Roy Ulrich, Los Angeles, California)

CUTOFFS:

Accused child molester asks for castration

By Barbara Linkin
OF THE HOUSTON POST STAFF

A man charged with molesting a child last April has volunteered to be castrated in lieu of being sentenced to life in prison.

Steven Butler, 27, is charged with aggravated sexual assault of a child in state District Judge Mike McSpadden's court.

But Butler read a Sept. 25 article in The Houston Post about McSpadden advocating surgical castration in such cases, and approached his lawyer and told her he wanted to have the procedure done.

He could have faced life imprisonment if convicted of the aggravated felony charge, his attorney said. He was on probation at the time for a 1990 charge of indecency with a child, a charge reduced from aggravated sexual assault of a child as part of a plea bargain.

Castration requires the surgical removal of

Please see CASTRATE, A-15

NASA photo

Alan Shepard had to contend with high lunar heat, low gravity on his golf shot.

Little slice of lunacy left 3 balls on moon

By Frank Bass
OF THE HOUSTON POST STAFF

It's not every day someone loses three of your golf balls from the same tee.

But then again, former River Oaks golf professional Jack Harden figures it's not every day that someone tees off from an orbiting sandtrap more than 220,000 miles from any known course.

It was 21 years ago today that former astronaut Alan Shepard strolled out of the lunar module Antares during the Apollo 14 mission, produced a utility tool that had a 6-iron head screwed onto it, and teed off from the moon.

"The first two, he didn't hit too well," said Harden, a 79-year-old golf pro at the Olympic Resort in Carlsbad, Calif. "The third one took off pretty good. But he

Please see GOLF, A-15

—*Houston Post,* February 6, same page

FIGHTING IRISH: Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan seems in a pugnacious mood lately. On March 13 he slapped Missouri Senator Kit Bond on the Senate floor during a fracas over the highway bill, according to *Congress Daily.* And in a March 17 *New York Times* story Moynihan is quoted threatening further violence if anyone tries to defend the subpoena of Nina Totenberg's phone records before the Senate Rules Committee, of which he is a member. "I'll guarantee there'll be blood on the walls of the committee room," he said. Must be the influence of St. Patrick's Day—or perhaps the Buchanan campaign.

KEVORKIAN'S FIVE & DIME: We recently received a catalog from the Hemlock Society, an organization that promotes euthanasia. The discerning suicide or mercy killer can choose from a wide variety of Hemlock literature, such as "Let Me Die Before I Wake," "The Right to Die," and "Death With Dignity." For those desiring a how-to approach, the catalog includes a "Drug Dosage Table." For $3 and a SASE, you can learn how much morphine, chloral hydrate, or phenobarbital it takes to do yourself in. For the just-in-case crowd, there's a living will, and for those rooting from the sidelines, T-shirts and bumper stickers. We're not trying to trivialize this serious issue—the Hemlock Society has done that already, and commercialized it to boot. •

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

TEETERING

By Fred Barnes

At Bush-Quayle headquarters three blocks from the White House, the strategy for putting President Bush right with conservative Republicans had been worked out as long ago as last January. Bush had to "lance the boil," the boil being the 1990 budget deal in which he reneged on his pledge of no new taxes. Bush could accomplish this by repudiating the deal. Only there was a problem. Bush was ambivalent about the deal, and budget director Richard Darman defended it stoutly. So lancing the boil on Bush's first trip to New Hampshire was scrapped. And the backup plan for doing it in a February 24 speech to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce was dropped too.

Darman thought the idea had been at least temporarily sidetracked. Not quite. Over dinner in late February, a group of political advisers (Darman wasn't invited) urged Bush to renounce the deal. Bush agreed the deal was a "mistake," since Democrats want to raise

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taxes again. The president and his advisers decided the boil would be lanced in late March when Bush vetoed a Democratic tax bill. But Bush couldn't wait. On March 2 he zinged the budget deal in interviews with columnist Cal Thomas and Dick Williams of the *Atlanta Journal*. The next morning, he repeated his words, saying the budget agreement hadn't kept Democrats from seeking new taxes and spending. But this wasn't exactly a renunciation. At a press conference on March 11, Bush was asked to clear up the matter. Was the deal a wrong policy idea? Yes, he said, it was "a total mistake." But no, he added, "I can't say—shouldn't say—total mistake."

Bush and his boys need adult supervision. Repudiating the budget deal should have been a piece of cake. Just say the deal was supposed to shrink the deficit and spur the economy, but it shrunk the economy, spurred the deficit, and now should be jettisoned. Bush couldn't manage that. He blurted out a sort of repudiation, then couldn't explain what he meant by it. He summed up his position at the press conference: "When you have to weigh a decision, in retrospect—have the benefit of hindsight—I would say both policy and politically, I think we can all agree that it has drawn a lot of fire." No kidding.

By adult supervision, I mean someone who exerts discipline on Bush's re-election bid and on the president himself. There are two people in Bush's orbit who have the clout to tell him he's acting like a klutz. One is Secretary of State James Baker, his old pal and campaign manager in 1980 and 1988. The other is Roger Ailes, his media consultant in 1988. But neither is involved in Bush's re-election. Nor is anyone effectively in charge of coordinating the entire re-election effort, making sure the White House and campaign are in sync. Baker did that for President Reagan in 1984 as White House chief of staff. Aides Ed Rollins and Lee Atwater were dispatched to run the campaign, but all they did was execute Baker's orders. The Nixon re-election campaign in 1972 was also run out of the White House.

The Bushies have adopted the Gerald Ford model from 1976, when White House chief of staff Dick Cheney shared power with campaign chief Baker. Cheney and Baker became fast friends, and they worked well together. Bush campaign chief Robert Teeter and Sam Skinner, the White House chief of staff, might develop an effective partnership, but they haven't yet. Teeter is well-liked and enormously respected as a strategist, but neither he nor Skinner is an authority figure whom others automatically look to for leadership. Neither can tell Bush to get in gear. Besides, they have disagreements. Teeter favored intense campaigning by Bush up to Super Tuesday on March 10. Skinner was skeptical (so was Bush). Moreover, Teeter is far more experienced in national campaigns and knows Bush better, yet must be deferential toward Skinner. That's bound to rankle.

Things fall through the cracks. Flying around Georgia with Bush before the state's primary on March 3, House Republican Whip Newt Gingrich pumped Bush with information about "poison pills" in the administration's budget (tax on annuities, disclosure of church contributions, etc.) by Treasury officials. Each, according to Gingrich, stuck in the craw of a faction in the GOP presidential coalition: "From the State of the Union to the present, the Treasury bureaucracy did more damage to George Bush than Pat Buchanan did." Bush was "stunned" to hear all this, Gingrich says, and asked for his notes on the subject. But the only result was that Skinner made matters worse with the Christian right by saying that the disclosure requirement might stay. Teeter and the campaign crowd weren't pleased by this.

Gingrich says he is "truly depressed" about Bush's re-election. "Every time I talk to the president, I feel very optimistic," he says. "Every time I talk to Teeter, I feel optimistic. Every time I talk to Skinner, I feel optimistic. But nothing happens." Gingrich wants Bush to push conservative themes and offer a clear choice to the Democratic nominee. But the Bushies won't even seize issues like the House banking scandal and exploit them. "The fact these guys are given an opportunity of this scale and don't take it makes me wonder what kind of game they're playing. It's not electing a president of the United States and defeating Democrats. I'm beside myself."

Gingrich's allies at the campaign and White House are also fit to be tied. They've developed a set of bold initiatives for Bush to use against Congress. One is to require federal agencies to log every contact by a member of Congress, just as they would if contacted by any lobbyist. Another is to threaten to veto all appropriations bills and submit a list of programs to be cut. Still another is to force Congress to vote on all of the president's proposed line-item budget cuts, which it normally ignores. These ideas, once submitted, usually fall into what a Bush aide calls "the black hole," never to be heard of again. A few slip into Bush speech texts, only to be excised before delivery.

Bush's trio of media consultants have had their own problems. At the campaign and the White House, there's grumbling about the TV spots. But it's the campaign and the White House causing the trouble. The commercials requiring approval by a gauntlet of White House and re-election officials—that is, ones featuring Bush in a speaking role—have been neutered. But the spots produced without interference have been punchy. Mike Murphy put together the commercial attacking Buchanan for owning a Mercedes. It had a sharp bite. Don Sipple produced an effective thirty-second spot on the Bush agenda ("change welfare ... end fraudulent lawsuits ... education reform") that got on the air intact.

There's a larger problem looming. Most of the Bush high command doesn't take Bill Clinton, the likeliest Democratic nominee, seriously. Their faith in negative TV spots, which worked so famously against Michael Dukakis in 1988, is boundless. Clinton, they figure, is vulnerable not only on his personal life, but on his lack of experience in foreign policy, his record as governor of Arkansas, his liberalism, etc. A few Bushies, however, have been impressed by Clinton's resilience and skill as

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a campaigner. Clinton's bring-us-together message to black and white groups is "exactly what the country wants to hear," a Bush campaign official says. Gingrich is blunt. "If they run a campaign counting on Clinton's personal weaknesses to beat him, they'll lose the general election. And I don't see them taking the steps necessary to beat Clinton." Not yet anyway. •

THE PRESS

HE'S BACK AGAIN

By David Postman

Last week a memo from the desk of Richard Nixon made the front page of *The New York Times*, provoked a flurry of op-eds, and staked out a major place on every Washington talk show. Calling Bush's response to Russia "pathetically inadequate" and "penny-ante," it proffered a radical alternative to the administration's passive policy toward the Yeltsin government. Funny thing is, Nixon had already made exactly the same point in January in an article in *Time* magazine. Only that time, no one noticed.

Why was none of this news in January when the same advice was given to millions of *Time* readers? Because sometimes it's not what you have, but how you got it. Quoting a confidential memo suggests infinitely more journalistic derring-do than quoting an article in a newsweekly. And Nixon remains a master of the leaker's art. He would never do what his successor did that same week. While Nixon was surreptitiously hyping his memo, Gerald Ford was making cold calls to reporters in Michigan, dumping on Pat Buchanan. He was rewarded for his forthrightness by the *Detroit News*, which said in a front-page story that the comments came in "an unsolicited phone call" from Ford.

In the magazine piece Nixon discussed the West's inaction and gave a list of things the United States should do to save Russia. Although Bush was not explicitly mentioned, Nixon did blame "those who overcommitted themselves to Gorbachev," which sounds a lot like Bush. Nixon knows enough about how the press works to realize that a former president making general criticism isn't front-page material. But jabs at a sitting president and his secretary of state are a hot story.

So he tried another tack. At the end of February Nixon sent out memos to fifty people, both friends and those prominent in foreign affairs. Brent Scowcroft got one, James Baker didn't. Memos have surfaced with dates from late February to early March. It was Daniel Schorr, the National Public Radio commentator and former denizen of Nixon's enemies list, who brought the memo to the *Times*'s attention. It had come to him through a friend, and when he called Nixon's New Jersey office to make sure it was OK to quote it, a staffer said Nixon wasn't available but "I'm sure he wouldn't mind." Schorr saw the same staffer a few days later, and wondered about the carefree attitude about the ex-president's personal correspondence. She replied, "We thought it would have been in print before that."

William Safire, the former Nixon phrase-maker and a *Times* columnist, missing the point of Nixon's exercise, lauded his former boss's savvy. "He rejected the mass media, who tend to paint their tails white and run with the antelopes," Safire wrote. In fact, Nixon was aiming for precisely what Safire said he was trying to avoid. Schorr has seen several copies of the Nixon memo, and at least one was dated three weeks before he got it. "I suspect that what happened is when nobody bit, Nixon said, 'Let's send it out to the B-list and see what happens,'" said Schorr.

Schorr was writing an op-ed piece himself for the *Times* on U.S. policy toward the former Soviet empire when he came across the memo. His editor, though, wanted a column for the next day focusing just on Nixon's memo. But the paper's policy is that the op-ed page doesn't scoop the newsies, so the memo ended up in the lap of State Department correspondent Thomas Friedman. Friedman uncritically regurgitated Nixon's main points, portraying the memo as a major challenge to a Republican president in an election year by a party elder statesman. The story itself was all Nixon and Friedman, unsullied by any hint of research or interviews with other players.

"It landed on my desk at 3 o'clock and the editor said, 'Write it up,'" Friedman says. (It's heartening to know that even after two Pulitzers and fat book contracts Friedman gets as much respect as any small-town city hall hack.) The memo was important, or at least interesting, he adds, because "it was president against president; mentor against protégé. It was a fairly articulate argument, I would say." But he concedes that what turned his editors on were the veiled attacks on Bush and Baker.

Did the story deserve the play it got, front page and above the fold in *The New York Times*? And virtually dictated by Nixon without comment by others? Baker was in Brussels, Friedman said, and "it's a little hard for me to pick up the phone and get the president." Although Friedman gave the administration a chance to respond in follow-up stories, he didn't think an answer was essential. "It's hardly the first time they faced this critique."

If there were any doubts, the *Times* buried them. The next day the paper ran a "news analysis" piece, again written by Friedman, essentially justifying the urgency and hype that surrounded the original coverage of the memo. The rest of the paper went hog wild, with follow-up stories, and columns by Schorr, Safire, and Leslie Gelb, who was actually critical of the proposal.

The Washington Post showed a less wacky sense of perspective on the memo, which it too had acquired. The

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same day as Friedman's piece, the *Post* ran a longer account of dissatisfaction with Bush's policy toward the former Soviet Union. Nixon's memo didn't figure until the tenth paragraph. The reporter, David Hoffman, didn't want to talk about the *Times*, but then added: "Instead of just putting one guy's voice on the front page we put a lot of voices in."

Schorr is a bit uncomfortable with his inadvertent contribution to burnishing the new Nixon's image. "It was really the Nixon campaign all over again. It was very, very sharply and sophisticatedly orchestrated so one thing would follow another," he said. "Knowing Nixon and his operation should have made me a little suspicious." Indeed, in the midst of the brouhaha, Nixon gave a long scheduled speech in Washington on the Soviet Union, which benefited from the advance publicity. "If you were to say this is a little bit of overkill," Schorr says of the *Times* play of the memo, "I think you may have a right to think that."

DAVID POSTMAN is on leave from the *Anchorage Daily News* and studying at the University of Michigan.

STEPANAKERT POSTCARD

REVENGE TRAGEDY

By Paul Quinn-Judge

The plane banked sharply as its pilot, brave but inexperienced, tried to move it up in a tight corkscrew maneuver to avoid Azeri anti-aircraft fire. The coffin in the seatless passenger section slid menacingly toward the center of the plane, and an Armenian soldier promptly sat on it to hold it in place. The rest of the passengers stood or squatted, holding onto each other as the aircraft fought for altitude.

The coffin contained a dead Russian soldier, killed the day before along with an Armenian irregular when their armored personnel carrier hit a land mine. In theory the Commonwealth of Independent States' army pulled out of here weeks ago, but no one bothers to hide the fact that Russians, Belorussians, and other soldiers of the former Soviet army have stayed behind to fight alongside Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenian irregulars. Some are playing major roles in planning the next offensive.

The flights into the city of Stepanakert are wild, but they appear to have reinforced the advantage that the enclave's Armenian majority has recently gained on the battlefield. The planes, which have been flying for about a week now, since the capture of Karabakh's main airstrip, take out wounded and dead, women and children. They bring in fuel for trucks and weapons.

The Armenians who live in Karabakh have declared themselves independent from Azerbaijan, which has controlled the area since 1923. Thanks to growing ethnic tension, the Azerbaijani minority population has dropped dramatically in the last four years. Now the Armenians are preparing to hit Shusha, once famous for its exquisite Caucasian carpets, and the last Azerbaijani stronghold in Karabakh, as well as at least one city in Azerbaijan proper, Agdam. The world community is belatedly scrambling to find a solution to the conflict before it spills over into the rest of the Caucasus and perhaps Central Asia too. But despite the best intentions of the U.N., the Islamic Conference, the CSCE, Iran, and Turkey, the chances of a compromise solution to this war look desperately remote.

Every day Azerbaijani forces in Shusha lob 100 or so Grad rockets into Stepanakert. Each rocket is a vicious cylinder of thick metal, more than twelve inches long, about four inches in diameter, and filled with metal fragments designed to multiply each missile's destructive power. On the day we spent in Stepanakert 152 landed. The rockets punch holes in houses and mangle bodies. They appear to be fired with only one intent, to maim and terrify. Stepanakert has no electricity and only the most rudimentary heating. Its citizens get their water from melting snow. The couple of ramshackle fire trucks often run out of fuel in the middle of raids, and stop at government offices to beg a bucket of gasoline. The hospital, once Communist Party headquarters, is low on medicine and has taken a number of direct hits.

In Armenia itself, separated from Karabakh by a small sleeve of Azerbaijani territory, the government is dropping the pretense of being just an interested observer. In downtown Yerevan, a pile of rocket-propelled grenades sits in the office of the special government committee that handles relations with Karabakh. A staffer keeps an AK-47 behind his desk and fiddles absentmindedly with his side arm as he makes phone calls. Armed guerrillas with luxuriant Fidel-style beards and wearing rumpled fatigues walk diffidently in the boardroom-size office. Later I saw two of them downstairs in the street, trying with an understandable lack of success to hail cabs, their rifles tucked behind their backs.

No wars are pleasant, but this one is grimmer than most. You don't get the impression that either side takes many prisoners. They do routinely take hostages, however. Officials in Stepanakert say the hostages there are housed with families whose loved ones have been seized by the Azeris. Massacres abound. Last summer Azeri irregulars forced Armenian villagers along the border from their homes, slaughtering those who refused to leave. The latest atrocity was in Khojaly, a couple of kilometers from Stepanakert and the site of Karabakh's largest airstrip. After fierce fighting, it was captured by Armenian forces, almost certainly backed by free-lancing Commonwealth forces, on the night of

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February 25. Azerbaijan immediately claimed that 1,000 civilians, many of them children and women, were killed in cold blood as they tried to flee to the Azerbaijani town of Agdam. TV pictures shot by Western and Azeri cameramen show mutilated bodies, some scalped, others with powder burns.

The figures are clearly exaggerated. By the time of the attack Khojaly was an armed camp that would have had difficulty sheltering the 7,000 residents that Azeris say lived there. The Azerbaijani account also leaves out some key points: Khojaly was not a peaceful village but the front line. It may also have been the site of one of the Grad rocket emplacements that has made life in Stepanakert hell. But a massacre almost certainly happened. Armenian officials in Karabakh admit that civilians were killed, but deny their people were responsible. Azeri defenders used their own civilians as a shield, they claim, and shot their womenfolk rather than let them be captured. Discrepancies aside, one Armenian police major pointed to the heart of the matter. Many of the Armenian fighters who took part in the attack came from Sumgait, an Azerbaijani industrial town that was the site of horrific anti-Armenian pogroms in 1988. The anniversary of the massacre coincided with the attack on Khojaly.

This is the key to the war. It is being fought on both sides by people who do not just want their land back—they want revenge. The brutal edge to the war is sharpened by the demonology that each side creates about the other. The Azerbaijan government gives visiting journalists a reprint of the works of Valery Velichko, a venomously racist Russian writer of the turn of the century, who depicts Armenians as genetic mongrels, slavish to superiors, cruel to inferiors, dishonest and cowardly—all Jewish features, he notes, only more pronounced among Armenians. Armenians and Azeris describe each other as "Gypsies," interlopers who have gradually stolen Karabakh from its rightful owners. Armenian fighters describe the nightmarish tortures they say Azeris inflict on prisoners. Referring to the lack of development of the region under the Soviets, an Armenian politician, Vartan Akopyan, says this was all right for Azeris: "They can live in hovels with their sheep. We need schools."

Armenian fighters say that once they have forced the Azeris out of Shusha and seized Agdam, they will seal the borders. But Valery, a Belorussian officer, until recently a member of the Soviet Airborne, is training a new elite border unit. He realizes that the capture of Shusha will not be the end of the war. "There will be raids and sabotage for years to come," he says.

Others predict even worse. If Shusha goes, many Azeris say, Azerbaijan will explode with rage. Then, once they have vented their fury on the government that let this happen, they will turn their attention once more to Karabakh. And a new round of the war will begin.

PAUL QUINN-JUDGE is Moscow correspondent of *The Boston Globe.*

Liberian war criminals in America.

OUT OF AFRICA

By Bill Berkeley

When Edward Smith walked into the Kendejah Restaurant in Northwest Washington, he may have been looking forward to a familiar West African meal of palm butter and rice with stewed cassava leaves. He undoubtedly wasn't looking forward to being recognized by his fellow Liberian exiles, refugees from the ongoing turmoil in their war-ravaged homeland. As he ordered a drink, Smith was greeted with shouts of "murderer!" and "war criminal!" The Liberian owner refused to serve him. With emotions rising and a whiff of violence in the air, someone grabbed Smith's arm and ushered him out the back door to safety. He has not been back since.

Smith is a former commanding general of the Liberian Armed Forces. He was one of the highest-ranking military aides to the late President Samuel K. Doe. In January 1990 Smith ran a brutal counterinsurgency campaign in which hundreds of civilians were shot, clubbed, or hacked to death and scores of villages were razed. Two years later he is one of a large number of Doe's henchmen who managed to flee Liberia and are now living happily in the United States. Some of these men, like Smith, were closely linked with the brutality of Doe's regime; others were merely implicated in the immense official corruption that bankrupted the country. The U.S. government, which helped some of these men get out of Liberia and into this country, appears unperturbed about providing refuge to this band of murderers and thieves.

Perhaps the most notorious of Doe's confederates was Charles Julu, who rose to become head of the president's personal militia. In 1985 Julu supervised a series of summary killings that helped sow the seeds of the catastrophic ethnic warfare that tore the country apart five years later. In the early stages of Liberia's civil war Julu was personally responsible for atrocities in which thousands died, including one incident in which a truckload of orphaned children were killed. Julu fled Liberia in July 1990 and is now laying low with an unlisted telephone number in Worcester, Massachusetts.

The story of Julu's flight to the United States appears to be a case of good intentions gone awry. Liberia's year-long civil war killed about 20,000 civilians, scattered more than 700,000 people into exile, laid waste to its economy, and destroyed the capital. At the height of the conflict in June 1990, Doe was barricaded in his mansion as rebels closed in on Monrovia. In an atmosphere of gathering

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anarchy, the capital was clogged with half a million refugees from vicious fighting in the countryside. Bands of drunken soldiers from Doe's minority Krahn tribe, sensing defeat, roamed the streets looting, robbing, and shooting suspected dissidents from other tribes. Food was running out, and an epidemic of cholera was feared.

In these dire circumstances, officials in the U.S. government, which had backed Doe for a decade after his rise to power in a bloody coup in 1980, tried to induce him to quit the country. But the man refused to budge. There were suspicions that he was being held hostage in the mansion by his fellow Krahn, who had good reason to think they would be dead meat once Doe was gone. So a strategy was devised to peel away Doe's support. Ambassador James Bishop, who served in Monrovia for three years until March 1990 and then headed the Liberia Task Force in the State Department, confirmed that U.S. visas were issued to Julu and another senior Krahn officer. "The thought was that if we could facilitate their departure, the Executive Mansion Guard [Doe's Krahn militia] would collapse around Doe, and that would reduce the likelihood of a full-scale battle in Monrovia with a huge loss of life. Unfortunately, it didn't work."

Indeed, it did not. Doe held out for two more months until he was finally captured by a rebel faction and tortured to death. And the battle for Monrovia raged on, an orgy of killing, looting, arson, and revenge. In one indelible episode, Krahn soldiers massacred 600 men, women, and children holed up in a Lutheran church.

Meanwhile, Doe's surviving allies were making their way to America. Julu has been sighted over the last year by fellow exiles near Providence, in the suburbs of Washington, and most recently in Worcester, where his wife and grown children have a home. There have also been reports that he has returned more than once to Sierra Leone, where a band of Krahn insurgents is organizing to make a new bid for power. Smith rents an apartment in Silver Spring, Maryland, where he too has an unlisted phone number.

Several of Doe's pre-eminent financial swindlers also have settled in the United States. Alvin Jones, who according to Liberians and American diplomats received millions in kickbacks while serving in various high-level posts, recently bought a house in Falls Church, Virginia, for $450,000 in cash. William Glay, a relative of the late president, accused of running lucrative extortion rackets in foreign imports and public contracts, lives in Silver Spring. Emmett Harmon, credited with stealing the 1985 presidential election for Doe while serving as head of the Special Election Commission, also lives in Maryland.

Julu and Smith, in particular, are closely identified with the disastrous cycle of ethnic violence they left behind. Both are Krahn, a tribe constituting barely 4 percent of Liberia's population of 3 million. Both served, at different times, as head of the Executive Mansion Guard. In August 1984, under Smith's leadership, the Guard attacked unarmed student demonstrators across the street from Doe's mansion, killing a still unknown number of students and raping a still unknown number of women, some with rifle butts. A year later, after a failed coup against Doe, the Guard slaughtered hundreds in reprisal, mostly members of the Gio and Mano ethnic groups presumed to have supported the coup attempt. Julu at that time was head of security in Nimba County, where the Gio and Mano predominate. After the coup attempt he ordered the public executions of prominent Gio politicians and businessmen. The killings earned Julu the permanent enmity of the Nimba region. It was in Nimba that the insurgency against Doe was launched five years later, and where both Smith and Julu were dispatched in early 1990 to lead the brutal, albeit unsuccessful, campaign to suppress it.

Though Julu obtained his visa as an inducement to bail out of Liberia, most of the others entered this country on multiple-entry visas they already possessed as high officials in a government then regarded as America's closest African ally. They have been allowed to stay under Temporary Protected Status, a designation granted to resident aliens from particularly chaotic and protracted civil strife. Salvadorans, Lebanese, and Somalis are the only others who qualify; Haitians, incidentally, have been applying in vain. Men like Julu and Smith have good reason to fear a return to Liberia: Krahn have been lynched by the thousands since the war. And they have much to fear from their fellow Krahn, who have suffered greatly for the sins of their leaders. "I don't think I would be safe in Liberia," said Glay, one of the few former officials reachable by phone. "There's no reason for people to be mad at me, but I'm a Krahnman, so I'm a target. Anyway, how did you get my number?"

Ambassador Bishop concedes that the continued presence here of such men is a "terrible situation." But he said the State Department cannot help track them down unless a legitimate government in Monrovia institutes extradition proceedings. "The law in this respect is unjust in my opinion," Bishop said.

The situation in Liberia right now is far too unstable for anyone to worry about such matters as extradition requests. A cease-fire is in force, but the country is still in chaos, with various factions controlling different areas of the country. Most of the countryside is controlled by the rebel leader Charles Taylor, himself a fugitive embezzler from Doe's Cabinet, who escaped from a Massachusetts prison in 1985 and has set up his own lucrative extortion rackets in mining and logging. Still, the United States is not without recourse. Under American law, protected status can be denied to those guilty of serious crimes, or who can be shown to have been involved in the persecution of their countrymen. There is no shortage of evidence regarding these men—much of it in the U.S. Embassy's own files.

"At some point we will ask the United States to call in some of these people," said Dr. Amos Sawyer, Liberia's interim president. Sawyer is a former political science professor who drafted the country's much-acclaimed but long-forgotten Constitution in 1984. In the mid-1980s Sawyer's bespectacled image was still featured on Liberian postage stamps even though Sawyer himself had

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been exiled after time in jail. Somewhere down the line, Sawyer said in a telephone interview from Monrovia, "there will be an attempt to ensure that there is justice, that there is no reward for those who feel that they can milk the land and repress the people, and then just move on."

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Why Buchanan is a bad Catholic.

EX CATHEDRA

By Paul Elie

If Patrick Buchanan is anything, one might think, he's a good Catholic. Unlike other miscreant politicians (Mario Cuomo, for example), he's clearly true to the faith, loyal to the authority of the Church. Buchanan, like the Jesuit teachers of his youth, is often portrayed by the secular media as one of "the pope's Marines," fearlessly vying for the Church Militant against its foes. The man who has been quick to accuse other Catholics of straying from the faith is presented as beyond theological reproach.

He isn't. In fact, Pat Buchanan is profoundly at odds with the teachings of his Church on a host of social issues, from the role of women to the role of the Church in society. By comparing the candidate's positions with those affirmed by the Church during and after the Second Vatican Council—the central affirmations of contemporary Catholicism—one can see that Buchanan has rejected or ignored the full counsels of his faith. He's no more upright—indeed he is far less obedient—than most American Catholics in several critical areas.

Women. Buchanan's oft-cited comment that women are "less psychologically equipped to handle the business world" is made in opposition to the witness of his Church. For even as the Church has upheld monogamy and the nuclear family as inviolable and refused to ordain women as priests, it has endorsed the notion of women's equality. Vatican II, while affirming the traditional Catholic view in which marriage and motherhood are fundamental to women's "particular nature," nonetheless noted with approval that modern women "claim parity with men in fact as well as in rights," and saw in "these claims ... the sign of a deeper and more widespread aspiration," namely that to holiness. Stating the "Urgent Duties of Christians in Regard to Culture," the council called "everyone to see to it that woman's specific and necessary participation in cultural life be acknowledged and fostered." Pope John Paul II reaffirmed the Vatican II position in a 1987 encyclical, stating further that "the Church gives thanks for ... women who work professionally, and who at times are burdened with a great social responsibility." And in the second preliminary draft of their forthcoming pastoral letter on women, the U.S. bishops deplored instances of "unequal treatment [of women] in the marketplace" as "unjust actions contradictory to the vision of rights and freedoms Christ offers" and even credited the women's movement as representing in part "the universal call to holiness." Admittedly, the release of the pastoral has been delayed by disputes between liberal and conservative prelates about the nature and scope of its message; even so, the words of the second draft suggest the depth of support for women's rights even in the moderate-to-conservative Catholic hierarchy that has emerged under John Paul II.

Jews and Judaism. Buchanan's claim that Jews entertain "group fantasies of martyrdom" and his praise of Hitler as "an individual of great courage" are by now notorious. Regrettably, these remarks have been seen by some as explicit evidence of Catholic anti-Semitism that they have discerned or encountered elsewhere. Not only anti-Semitism, however, but insensitivity toward Jews is deplored by Buchanan's Church. In Vatican II the Church urged its people "to enter with prudence and charity" into dialogue with members of other religions. In particular it spoke of Catholics' relations with Jews; acknowledging the "common spiritual heritage" of Christians and Jews, it called for shared biblical and theological inquiry and for "friendly discussions." A subsequent Vatican document lamented the "frequent confrontation" of the past 2,000 years, and stressed that "the mass media" are vital means of interreligious education. Buchanan, in contrast, has often depicted Catholic-Jewish relations—especially over sensitive issues such as the Holocaust—in almost pugilistic terms.

Racial minorities. Vatican II put forth the vision of a universal church, and with it a human society, in which "no inequality arising from race or nationality, social condition or sex should exist." Subsequent statements by the Vatican and the U.S. bishops have spelled out the demands of such a vision upon the Church in the modern world—demands with which Buchanan's views are wildly at odds. While Buchanan has suggested that Zulus would find it hard to assimilate into American society and derided a (presumably black) Washington resident for playing "bongo drums" on the sidewalk, the 1988 Vatican document *The Church and Racism* called for all peoples to "recognize the diversity and complementarity of one another's cultural riches," and John Paul II, in an address titled "To Build Peace, Respect Minorities," stressed that "the right of minorities to preserve and develop their own culture" must be safeguarded. Whereas Buchanan has lamented the "flood tide of immigration" that has transformed the Washington of his youth, John Paul II celebrated immigration throughout his 1987 U.S. pilgrimage, citing California, for example, as "a haven for immigrants, a new home for refugees." In a homily at Dodger Stadium in 1987, the

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pope applauded Los Angeles precisely for its diversity, noting that "today in the Church in Los Angeles, Christ is Anglo and Hispanic, Christ is Chinese and black, Christ is Vietnamese and Irish, Christ is Korean and Italian ..." The Church has also called U.S. immigration policy "neither workable nor morally acceptable," and urged Congress to liberalize immigration laws so that they might "truly reflect the American commitment to social and economic justice for all."

Homosexuals and AIDS. Here, contrary to much secular impression, Buchanan is also way out of line. In a column about "Catholic-bashing" and last year's St. Patrick's Day parade in New York City, Buchanan proposed that about "male sodomy and lesbianism, the traditional Catholic teaching is well known"; in an earlier column, he didn't even bother to invoke Catholic teaching, reviling "sodomites" on the basis of "common sense and the wisdom of the ages." Had he developed the Catholic teaching in any detail, however, his own position would have crumbled. To be sure, the Vatican's 1975 "Declaration on Certain Problems of Sexual Ethics" says that homosexual acts are "necessarily and essentially disordered," grounding this in biblical injunctions against homosexuality and in the "traditional teaching that only in legitimate marriage does the use of the sexual faculty find its true meaning and its probity." But it says too that homosexuals' "culpability will be judged prudently," and that moral zeal must "go hand in hand with tolerance and charity." In particular, "all in whose hands are the means of social communication ... must be circumspect, prudent, and moderate and must display sound judgment." A 1986 Vatican document on "The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons" reiterates the stand against homosexual acts but deplores "violent malice" against homosexuals "in speech or in action," noting that "such treatment deserves condemnation ... [as it] reveals a kind of disregard for others which endangers the most fundamental principles of a healthy society."

On AIDS, Buchanan is the least Catholic of all. His anti-gay views and belief that AIDS is divine retribution for homosexuality are well known. Vatican II, of course, said nothing about AIDS, but since the 1980s the Church has spoken about the subject at length, with American bishops being especially strenuous in their reflections. In 1987 Buchanan's own bishop, Cardinal James Hickey of Washington, wrote to inform priests that another priest of the diocese had died of AIDS, noting that "Father Michael's death challenges us to reach out to those with AIDS with renewed conviction and caring. This is a time for prayer, compassion, and sympathy, not judgment or sensationalism." Speaking to people with AIDS that year, John Paul II stressed that "God loves those of you who are suffering from AIDS and AIDS-related complex.... Compassion—love—toward persons infected with HIV is the only authentic Gospel response." And addressing diplomats in Tanzania about AIDS in 1991, the pope declared that the threat of AIDS "is so great that indifference on the part of public authorities, condemnatory or discriminatory practices toward those affected ... should be considered forms of collaboration in this terrible evil which has come upon humanity."

Positions of this sort are grounded in an essentially social model of the Church—one that balances authority with compassion, urges the believer to undertake public acts of justice and mercy, and employs social services to meet human needs. Buchanan has derided such a model of the Church, saying that its gospel of social action must have been "picked up in the vestibule of the first church of Christ, Socialist." In this, he is in conflict not only with the Vatican II Church but with its reading of the whole Christian tradition. For John Paul II, invoking the first of the Church's "social encyclicals" and quoting from his own encyclical on labor, has said that "the social dimension was 'from the beginning part of the Church's teaching, her concept of man and life in society, and especially the social morality which she worked out according to the needs of the different ages.'" With his nativism, his willingness to define tradition in the narrowest sense, his rhetorical ill will, and his dismissal of any outlook other than his as "the Church Milquetoast," Buchanan not only perpetuates an ugly stereotype of American Catholics but cleaves to a vision of the Church radically different from the Church that exists—and to which Catholics owe fidelity—today. In doing so, Buchanan is within his rights of dissent. But he is not within his rights to claim that he speaks for the Church, or that the views he holds are representative of Catholic orthodoxy. For the vast majority of believing American Catholics, Buchanan is an acute embarrassment. And from the point of view of Rome itself, he is in open revolt.

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Bill Clinton in Illinois.

THE POL

By Sidney Blumenthal

For Bill Clinton, the personal is the political. At the bottom of all the layers of his elaborate apparatus—the advance men, the schedulers, the press secretaries—the campaign rests on his friends, or FOBs (Friends of Bill), as they are known. Clinton has maintained relationships with many people he has known since nursery school. His talent for friendship is not motivated entirely by his ambition, though it is a reflection of the qualities of the natural politician. The distinction between the person and the politician simply doesn't exist; the curtain does not

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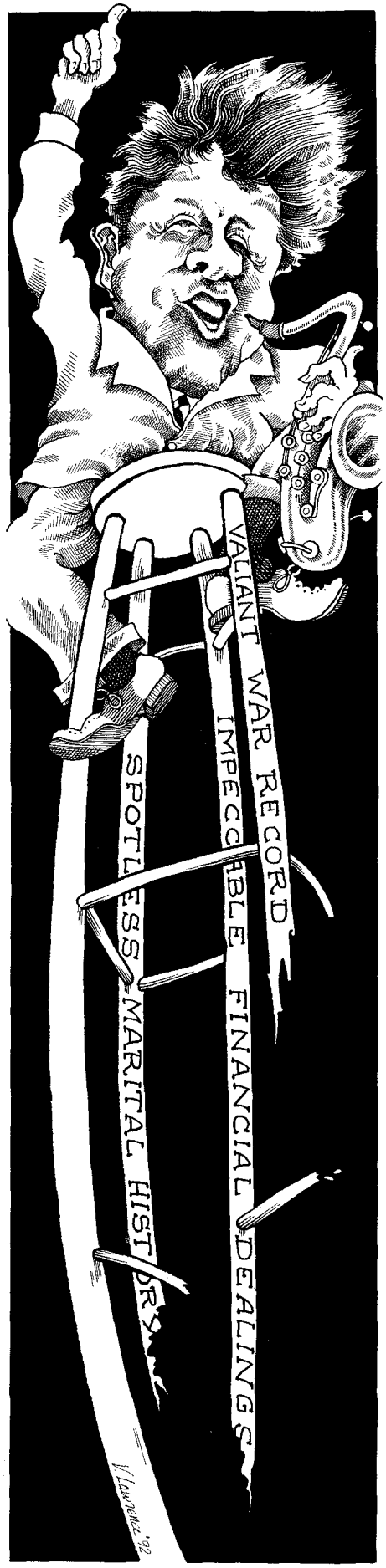
come down. That he is all of a piece is both his strength and weakness. Why many are discomforted by the rise of Clinton—his unvarnished exuberance in the practice of politics—is in great part why he is succeeding.

On the first day of the Illinois primary campaign, Clinton's first stop was Chicago City Hall. He appeared with Mayor Richard M. Daley, who praised him at length. It was the equivalent of an endorsement without taking the complete leap. Everyone understood that this scene was not some subtle act of indirection. As if to underline the obviousness of it, Daley, when asked if he would stage a similar ceremony for Paul Tsongas, simply said: "No." His monosyllabic answer was the short version of the famous remark once made by a Chicago ward committeeman to an eager would-be volunteer: "We don't want nobody nobody sent." Daley's laying on of hands was a symbolic gesture, what mayors of Chicago named Daley do with prospective Democratic nominees. It sent the signal that Clinton had been sent.

He was in a place where the first principles of politics, the ties that bind, are friendship and loyalty. The image of the political machine may be of a grinding, gleaming steel tool. But it is, in fact, a skein of personal connections. "Personal relationships, that's the key," said David Wilhelm, Clinton's campaign manager, who had also managed Daley's two campaigns and Senator Paul Simon's. "It's a very personal politics," chimed in Rahm Emmanuel, Clinton's finance director, who served in the same capacity for Daley. "Clinton knew where to go," said David Axelrod, who has done the media for Daley's effort and was consulting for Clinton. And yet the old Chicago machine is hardly the unitary powerhouse it was when Rich's father was in his heyday, delivering his fifty-nine delegates in a bloc at the Democratic convention of 1960 to Jack Kennedy. What came to Clinton in Chicago was hardly automatic.

Racked by economic decline and racial strife, Chicago had earned the label of "Beirut by the lake." Politics had become a survival course in a series of deadly war zones. Crossing



invisible lines in the street would provoke intense sniper fire. The carnage was not merely black versus white, but also black-on-black and white-on-white. The election of Daley after the death of Harold Washington, the insurgent black mayor, unexpectedly calmed some of the racial animosity as a result of his careful efforts to include blacks in his administration. But there were still smoldering ruins, still bitter skirmishes. The ascendancy of the son had not meant the restoration of the days of the father.

Yet behind Clinton the fragmented organization unified in a way that had not been seen even years before the older Daley keeled over in the waiting room of his doctor's office. Every faction of the City Council, every black leader of significance, every power in the state legislature, every official of the party organization lined up without jostling. It was the most awesome display of American organization since the Gulf war. The machine that had come to resemble other Rustbelt industries fallen on hard times hummed once again.

The Arkansas governor had to demonstrate Chicago-level savvy to conjure his Chicago campaign. It began, as always, with an FOB, or in this case an FOH (Friend of Hillary). Kevin O'Keefe had met Hillary Rodham when they were kids in Park Ridge, a Chicago suburb. His uncle Jimmy had been an influential Chicago contact of the Kennedys. Politics was all in the family. O'Keefe became a partner in the law firm of O'Keefe, Ashenden, Lyons, and Ward. Lyons happens to be Thomas Lyons, the chairman of the Cook County Democratic Party. In the mid-1980s, when Bill Clinton considered making a race for the presidency in 1988, he drew O'Keefe into his circle. O'Keefe, in turn, introduced him to Lyons, Thomas Hynes, the powerful city assessor, Phil Rock, the Illinois Senate president, and the Daley brothers, Rich and Bill. They felt extremely comfortable with each other. "If you filter out the accents, they're talking the same language," said O'Keefe. "There is a natural alliance between big-city

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Democrats and Southern Democrats. A governor has to deal with the same type of problems at about the same magnitude as a mayor: education, public service unions, raising tax revenues on your own because you don't get much help from the federal government. And you have to build biracial coalitions."

Though Clinton passed on a campaign in 1988, he kept up his ties. He understood that Illinois would be central to his strategy, the place that could accelerate his momentum after Super Tuesday. Last summer he began regular trips to Chicago. Not only did he touch base with the Daleys and the others, but he started to cultivate black politicians of all sorts. On O'Keefe's recommendation, Clinton hired Wilhelm as his manager and Emmanuel to raise his money. John Schmidt, one of the mayor's closest friends, who had headed up his transition team, became the co-chairman of Clinton's state finance committee. "If Rich had said to Rahm and me, 'Don't do this,' we would have listened," said Wilhelm. "Instead he said, 'Good luck.'" Clinton's press conference with Mayor Daley upon his arrival for the Illinois campaign was not a tentative first step, but the result of long years of preparation. He was hardly the bumpkin in the big city, but, according to O'Keefe, "somebody identified with people people identify with."

Of all the players arranged on the stage on Clinton's behalf, none was more indispensable than Paul Tsongas. Virtually everything he said and did enhanced Clinton. The battle between them, Tsongas had explained, was between "a message and a machine." He attacked the endorsements that Clinton had piled up, called him the lackey of the "establishment." Unfortunately, Tsongas had no idea where he was. For him, the psychological climax of the campaign had taken place in New Hampshire, and he had little notion of the particularities of politics outside New England. Tsongas was lost in America. "Illinois is Lowell," he said with simplistic certitude. Tsongas, with his anti-political railings, had offended the local political culture, defining him as an outlander. In the city of the big shoulders, he needed shoulder pads. But he had neither an urban coalition nor even much suburban support. (In fact, the only place outside his region where he has demonstrated significant voter identification is the Maryland suburbs of Washington. His candidacy, to a large extent, may be a Washington problem: an a- and anti-political projection of the out-of-power Democratic new class.)

Tsongas believed that the stalling of his campaign was due to the dishonesty of Clinton. "He's no Bill Clinton. That's for sure," went one of his television spots. "He's not afraid of the truth." Tsongas's assets—his wit, his absence of hostility—deserted him. In public, he became somewhat testy and dour. He no longer seemed like a fresh personality, but one who had soured. His campaign really ended the day it began in Illinois. First, he lectured a group of black students about capital gains—"no more Santa Claus." He said not a word about the problems of race, education, life in the inner cities. Then, he departed to campaign in Michigan. His plane, with painful symbolism, got stuck in the mud on the runway. He couldn't take off.

In Michigan the unacceptable Tsongas was making Jerry Brown possible. Brown is a political metamorph, like the terminator-hunter in *Terminator 2*, instantly changing shape from a metal weapon to a humanoid and back again. He is less the embodiment of his positions than a computer graphic enhancement. Where Tsongas campaigned by stiffening his rigidity, the endlessly supple Brown simply evolved. In distressed Michigan he became the militant proletarian radical. During the final debate, citing Ralph Nader, Brown inaccurately recited a *Washington Post* article: "He is funneling money to his wife's law firm for state business," Brown charged about Clinton. Clinton swiveled, took a menacing step toward him and jabbed his finger: "I don't care what you say about me, but you ought to be ashamed of yourself for jumping on my wife." Stand by your woman. Now Brown was a Bernard Shaw metamorph, daring Clinton, as Shaw dared Dukakis, to defend his wife's honor. The day before, Nader had privately offered to campaign for Clinton, while he was playing games with Brown. "The reason I used your name," Brown later flattered Nader, according to a source who spoke with him, "was to raise the debate to a higher level."

The main contribution of Tsongas to the campaign has been to shape Clinton's electoral base. With his resounding victories in Illinois and Michigan, Clinton has reconstructed a coalition of working-class whites and blacks that has been unseen since Robert F. Kennedy last put one together in 1968. That year the Democratic Party was wrenched into halves by the rivalry between Lyndon Johnson and Bobby Kennedy. The political character of Clinton is wholly original, but he reflects aspects of both figures. He is not like Bobby the saint, or Bobby the existential hero, the images of RFK that have gained currency since his assassination, but more like the real Bobby, the single-minded pol, whose politics were indissolubly linked to his constituencies. His identity, in the end, was drawn from his relationship with the voters. But Clinton may also be like the illegitimate good son of Lyndon Johnson, a tactile Southern politician, who strives for consensus partly out of an innate desire to please and partly because he wants to bring conflicting parties—but especially races—together. What made LBJ and RFK so potent was precisely their political characters. And it has been Clinton's political personality, with echoes of the Democratic past, that has been essential to his coalition.

The Illinois and Michigan results may augur a healing of wounds within the party. But the consummate politician is triumphing when politics itself has turned toxic. How does one become a hero when Camelot has long ago disappeared into the mist? In the decades it has taken Clinton to reach the top of his craft, politics has fallen into disgrace and his virtuoso practice of it has become inherently suspicious. "Bill Clinton can't pander his way to the White House," insists Tsongas. Clinton suffers because he lives after the fall. He has been

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slashed and burned for his personal life in a way that President Kennedy never was. Clinton has adroitly tried to play by the rules, but the rules have radically shifted. He is a politician who must cope with the collapse of politics. Politics, like nature, abhors a vacuum, and it has been saturated with anti-politics. Clinton must persevere in a world without political romance.

In this, ironically, Clinton's greatest ally will be George Bush; his greatest recent model, Ronald Reagan. The most fundamental difference between Bush and Reagan is that Bush does not share Reagan's idea of the presidency. Reagan was not merely a diplomat at large, or the head of government, but the leader of society. Bush simply can't be bothered, or is acutely uncomfortable in such democratic settings. Instead, he relies upon political technique, especially the technique of driving "wedges" into the Democratic coalition. Bush's abandonment of the heart of the presidency—the social leadership of the country—provides Clinton's greatest opening. His survival may well depend upon it. It has become a truism that he has survived his trials and tribulations because of his personal energy. But in the last Illinois debate, Clinton claimed that he has survived because he is "a change agent." These explanations are dissonant, but not contradictory. His wins in the big Midwestern states enable him to bear out his rationale as a collective expression of change.

If Clinton can make his candidacy about more than individual ambition, he can begin to shield himself from further assaults. He must focus his strategy so that those he has come to represent are his message. His coalition in the primaries must stand for more than a base for nomination. It is a beginning of the end of racial division, which is linked with economic renewal. Clinton has the chance to fuse economic strategy with social philosophy in a way that allows him to overcome his own image as politically conventional. In this light, he can cast the "wedge" issues that Bush will inevitably use not simply as attempts to destroy his person but as reflections and elements of the policies of decline.

Meanwhile, the primaries continue. The race is not ended. And yet it is fairly clear that finally the battle will not pit anti-politics versus politics, virtue versus vice, purity versus corruption. A Bush-Clinton contest will be between two men whose whole lives are political. For Bush, politics is a devil he's sold his soul to; it's a Faustian bargain in exchange for which he gets the job. Politics is something unclean that he knows is necessary; and, as he has said, he'll do "whatever it takes." For Clinton, politics is not something he needs to be compensated for; it's the life force. He has no disdain for its arts, and this was why his margin in Illinois was so huge. But his skill as a politician may be in how well he can overcome the suspicions raised about him by the disillusioning practice of anti-politics. The key may be found in whether he has the understanding of the presidency that made Lyndon Johnson and Bobby Kennedy—and Ronald Reagan—larger than their personal flaws. •

What does Clinton stand for?

GREASEMAN

By Morton Kondracke

Rival candidates and others who don't like him label Bill Clinton a panderer, "Slick Willie," and a phony "outsider" who's easily metamorphosed into 1992's Walter Mondale, the favorite of party hacks and special interests. But this Bill Clinton would not have defended free trade as Clinton did on March 14 in Flint, Michigan, at the headquarters of historic and beleaguered UAW Local 659, a union that Walter Reuther used as his base in the famed sit-down strikes of 1937 and that now faces losing 3,800 members' jobs if GM goes through with its plan to close the V-8 engine plant across the street.

Hand-scrawled signs plastered on the walls read, "Tell Japan to Go to Hell" and "No Jobs to Mexico." Kids from the union-sponsored Junior Achievement organization were selling "Buy American" T-shirts bearing caricatures of dark-skinned foreigners of indeterminate nationality. It's official UAW policy to support limits on Japanese imports and to oppose the U.S.-Mexico Free Trade Agreement. As Clinton was speaking, Jerry Brown was at a neighboring union hall, railing against the Mexico free trade pact.

Clinton did tell the union crowd a lot it wanted to hear: that he supports laws banning the hiring of replacements for workers on strike. He also gave himself room to quarrel with a Mexican free trade agreement negotiated by George Bush. But he indulged in no Japan-bashing and patiently explained why American workers would benefit in the long run from free trade with Mexico: "I would never for a moment encourage American companies to move jobs to Mexico.... But if we build a common market with them that would require them to raise the pay of their workers and raise the level of their investment in environmental protection, that would cut the gap in the cost of labor and investment and reduce the incentive for Mexican workers to come across the Rio Grande to depress wages in this country and increase their ability to buy American products. Increasing the volume of trade would be good for everybody." Nobody cheered, but Clinton wasn't hooted out of the hall either. This candidate obviously has an ability to make people listen to unfamiliar arguments.

This performance notwithstanding, Clinton has done a lot of pandering and waffling in the campaign. His policy advisers, distressed about the pattern, say most of it occurred from late last December through Super Tuesday, a phase when newly hired political advisers James

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Carville and Paul Begala were urging Clinton to make himself seem the most "electable" of Democratic candidates. Since Super Tuesday, say the policy types, Clinton has been back "on message," although that doesn't erase the record. In South Dakota he promised to maintain farm subsidies and indicated he would fire an economic aide, Robert Shapiro, for calling in this magazine for an end to agricultural handouts. In Texas he backed funding for two scientific boondoggles, the superconducting supercollider and NASA's space station. In Florida he attacked Paul Tsongas for backing mild lids on Social Security cost-of-living adjustments, even though his own aides say he can't begin to reduce the budget deficit without controls on entitlements. Suspiciously, Clinton has won the endorsement of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees even though he talks about "reinventing" (i.e., debureaucratizing) government and giving public service jobs to non-union welfare recipients and to college graduates who will pay off scholarship aid through his proposed national service program.

All this suggests Clinton is a man without core principles, Bush with a twang. But close examination of Clinton statements before and during this campaign, and interviews with him and his advisers, suggest that Clinton has policy beliefs and priorities. He believes in activist government, in America's ability to "win again" in free global economic competition, in work-force training, education, and targeted tax cuts as the means to reinvigorate the economy; in racial harmony and in citizens' taking "personal responsibility" for their behavior, not merely expecting government to provide for them. His record in Arkansas and his platform also indicate that he is a government reformer interested in new, more efficient ways of delivering services.

Tsongas charges that Clinton's $30 billion tax cut for the middle class constitutes "poll-based pandering." Republicans say his method of paying for it—a hike in the top income tax rate to 38.5 percent for those making more than $200,000 a year—and his stump declarations that "it's time the well-off paid their fair share" amount to "class warfare" unworthy of the former chairman of the moderate Democratic Leadership Council. But DLC types (including Shapiro, still a key Clinton adviser) say that "tax fairness" has always been one of their themes. It certainly has been a consistent Clinton theme ever since his DLC-drafted "New Covenant" speeches last fall, when he also declared that he would limit the tax deductibility of "excessive" corporate salaries. Clinton favors an increase in the earned income tax credit as well, so that all forty-hour workers will have incomes above the poverty line (costed at $1 billion a year), and a phased-in child tax credit worth up to $475 per year per child for lower-income working families (costing $4 billion to $5 billion per year when fully operational).

Clinton told me he is already working up "one of those great 100-day efforts" that will include "all the things that relate to making the American people more competitive, creating more producers than consumers of tax dollars." This includes full funding of Head Start, national school standards and testing, a start on nationwide two-year worker apprenticeships to replace existing vocational education programs, authorization of a "GI bill" whereby all high school graduates would be guaranteed a college education paid back by them through the tax system or through national service, and a "lifetime learning" program that would require corporations to set aside 1.5 percent of their payroll for upgrading the skills of their workers. Most of these ideas were in Clinton's keynote speech to the DLC's convention last May in Cleveland and have been there ever since.

This part of Clinton's program is based on the writings of Harvard professor (and TNR contributing editor) Robert Reich and economic consultant Ira Magaziner, who argue that of all the elements of production, America needs first to upgrade its labor force to compete in world markets. Clinton tells his crowds that Republican policy is to meet competition by encouraging high-wage plants to move abroad, leaving workers out in the cold and forcing them to accept "hard work, low-wage" jobs. He wants to train and retrain them for "high-wage, high-skill" jobs as he says Japan and Germany do for their workers.

Advisers put the eventual cost of Clinton's various work-force initiatives, including those for welfare recipients heading toward work, at between $18 billion and $25 billion per year. Clinton told me that while he doesn't rule out a tax increase, all this (and infrastructure, conversion of defense industries to civilian work, and increased research and development spending) could be paid for through a $100 billion, five-year cut in the defense budget, health cost savings, and a 3 percent annual reduction in federal administrative expenses. That's obviously wrong, and Clinton sooner or later is going to have to declare which taxes he will raise and/or what savings he can get by cutting existing programs.

The second key to Clinton's immediate program is a set of targeted tax cuts for industry—an investment tax credit for new plant and equipment within the United States (costing $2 billion a year) and a capital gains cut for new businesses (eventually costing around $500 million). Clinton claims these cuts are preferable to across-the-board capital gains cuts that encourage stock purchases for investment that may occur outside the United States. He says that current tax law favors movement of plants overseas over investment at home. Eliminating various breaks for setting up abroad might net $2 billion or more, his staff figures, enough to pay for his domestic tax cuts.

Another consistent theme—dating back to his earliest days in politics in Arkansas—is a vow to end racial division. Clinton charges that Republicans, like Southern Bourbons in former times, purposely pit whites against blacks to divert them from their common economic complaints. Yet other than economic "empowerment," Clinton has no particular program for ending ethnic strife. He claims to be against racial quotas but clearly will do nothing about existing set-aside programs. He makes urgent speeches to both white and black audiences, and tells black audiences they have a responsibility to get off

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Why We Need A Smaller U.S. Population And How We Can Achieve It

We need a smaller population in order to halt the destruction of our environment, and to create an economy that will be **sustainable** over the very long term.

We are trying to address our steadily worsening environmental problems without coming to grips with their root cause – overpopulation.

If present immigration and fertility rates continue, our population, now over 254 million, will pass 400 million by the year 2050 -- and still be growing rapidly!

All efforts to save our environment will ultimately be futile unless we not only halt U.S. population growth, but reverse it, so that our population can eventually be stabilized at a **sustainable** level – far lower than it is today.

The Optimum U.S. Population Size

The central issue is surely this: **At what size should we seek to stabilize U.S. population?** Unless we know in what direction we should be headed, how can we possibly devise sensible policies to get us there?

The size at which our population is eventually stabilized is supremely important because of the effect of sheer numbers on such vitally important national goals as a healthy environment, and a sustainable economy.

We believe these goals can best be achieved with a U.S. population in the range of 125 to 150 million, or about its size in the 1940s. This optimum size could be reached in about three to four generations if we do two things now that are well within our grasp.

How To Get There

1. **Reduce annual immigration to about 200,000** so that it is in rough balance with emigration (out-migration). Then, immigration will no longer contribute significantly to our population growth, as it does now.

2. **Lower our fertility rate** (the average number of children per woman) from the present 2.1 to around 1.5 and maintain it at that level for several decades. We believe that non-coercive financial incentives will be necessary in order to reach that goal.

If almost all women had no more than two children, our fertility rate would drop to around 1.5, because many women remain childless by choice, or choose to have not more than one child. **We promote the ideal of the two-child maximum family as the social norm, because that is the key to lowering our fertility.**

NPG Proposes These Incentives to Motivate Parents to Have Not More Than Two Children

- Eliminate the present Federal income tax exemption for dependent children born after a specified date.
- Give a Federal income tax credit **only** to those parents who have not more than two children. Those with three or more would lose the credit entirely.
- Give a refundable tax credit (cash payment) to low income parents who are eligible for the tax credit, to the extent that the credit exceeds their tax liability.
- Give a cash bonus for voluntary sterilization to both men and women under age 35, who have already had at least one child.

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welfare, stay off drugs, and fight crime. But his emphasis is on helping them do so, and he avoids offense.

Clinton considers controlling the federal deficit a "very important" priority, but he goes on to say that maybe it can be handled simply by cutting health costs and defense and by making government administrative reforms. He tells audiences, "I won't kid you. I won't say, 'read my lips.'" On the other hand, he doesn't say, "I won't kid you. We'll have to raise some taxes and cut some entitlements to afford all I want to do." In interviews (though not in speeches) he has begun to say he'd tax Social Security and Medicare benefits of well-off recipients, but he hasn't listed other cuts in subsidies.

If he gets nominated, Republicans surely will portray Clinton as a "liberal" disguised as a moderate, but his program differs considerably from New Deal and Great Society liberalism. Clinton is an advocate of "reciprocal obligation," including the repayment for college loans in money or work and the requirement that welfare recipients work after they get training. He also has a record and a program of trying new ways to deliver services—through public school choice in education, vouchers for child- and elder-care services, denial of driver's licenses for school dropouts, boot camps for first-time offenders, and rigorous efforts to collect child support payments from fathers. He also favors the death penalty for heinous murders.

For all his programmatic energy and creativity, however, there may be a fatal flaw in Clinton, and it has nothing to do with sexual propriety. One of his advisers said, "He has more of a policy spine than a personal one. I haven't seen the steel in the guy that convinces me there are principles he'd live and die for." This supporter says Clinton "likes to be liked too much" and that he wants to see Clinton "get somebody mad"—especially some interest group within the Democratic coalition. Some of Clinton's advisers concur that he can't hope to govern the country unless he gets a mandate to do some unpopular things to control spending and change what he calls "the brain-dead policies of both parties in Washington." But, they say, no candidate ought to be required to commit political suicide to prove his integrity. And Bill Clinton's instincts are about as far away from political suicide as you can imagine. •

Jews and Muslims in Columbus's Spain.

THE OTHER 1492

By Fouad Ajami

I.

The Edict of Expulsion issued by Ferdinand and Isabella on March 31, 1492, had the Jews quitting Spain on the last day of July of the same year. All Don Isaac Abravanel could do for his people was secure them a two-day stay of execution. Abravanel, one of the great figures of Iberian Jewry, had given Ferdinand and Isabella eight years of service: he had organized the chaotic finances of Castile and Aragon and helped the sovereigns in their final push against the Muslim stronghold of Granada. The work of the Reconquista against Muslim Spain completed, Don Isaac was suddenly thrown into the supreme challenge of his life.

Fragments survive of Abravanel's futile pleas to the Spanish sovereigns. There is the narrative by Don Isaac himself recorded in exile: "Thrice on my knees I besought the King. 'Regard us, O king, use not thy subjects so cruelly.' But as the adder closes its ear with dust against the voice of the charmer, so the King hardened his heart against entreaties of his supplicants."

Ferdinand and Isabella offered Don Isaac the chance to stay in Spain with his wealth and position intact—the edict had prohibited the Jews from taking any gold, coins, or silver with them. In return, he would of course have to undergo baptism and conversion. Abravanel chose dispossession and exile. There were lands where the life of the faith could be lived—the Italian city-states, Portugal, the Netherlands, the Muslim domains of the Ottoman Sultan, the Barbary states of Tunis, Algiers, and Tripoli, and there was a haven in Egypt.

Thanks to the two-day extension secured by Abravanel the last ships that took the Jews to these lands left Spain on the second of August. This "fleet of woe and misery," says one chronicler, was to sail parallel to a "fleet of high promise." Christopher Columbus's fleet was ready for sea on the second of August: the men received their communion at the Church of St. George in Palos on that day. The Captain General set sail in the

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early hours of the third day of August.

Months earlier there had been another departure: Boabdil, the last Muslim king of Granada, took to the road. History and grief and yearning have touched and ennobled that story. On the last ridge, overlooking Granada, the storytellers say, Boabdil paused to catch a final glimpse of his realm. The ridge came to be known as El Ultimo Sospiro del Moro, the Moor's last sigh. Boabdil's unsentimental mother is said to have taunted him during his moment of grief. "You should weep like a woman for the land you could not defend like a man." In truth, there was not much that Boabdil could have done. Granada was living on borrowed time. Boabdil cut the best possible deal with the Spanish: an estate for himself, a pledge of safety for the people of his city, safe passage for those who could not bear to live under Christian rule. The victors made another promise: Muslims who stayed behind were not to be molested; their religious rights were to be honored. That pledge would be violated. The remaining Muslims would face, a decade hence, the same choice offered the Jews: conversion or exile. A century later the Moriscos—the Moorish converts to Christianity—were also expelled.

II.

Men invent and reinvent the past. In the legend of Moorish Spain, the Jews of Toledo opened the gates of the city to the Muslim conquerors when they came in 711. They were eager to welcome the Muslim armies that had overrun the Visigothic kingdom. The legend is groundless. In the war between the Goths and the Muslim armies, the Jews were, for the most part, quiet spectators. To be sure, they were glad to see the defeat of the Goths. The same must have been true of the Ibero-Roman natives of the peninsula. The Goths had been severe rulers. They had not allowed the Jews to sing their Psalms, to celebrate Passover, to testify in court against Christians, or to observe their dietary laws. Forced baptisms of Jews was a recurring phenomenon under Visigothic rule. Centuries later Montesquieu was to observe that all the laws of the Inquisition had been part of the "Visigothic code" that regulated the conduct of the Jews in seventh-century Spain.

It was a polyglot world that the Muslims came to rule in the Iberian peninsula. There were Arabs, Berbers, Jews, and blacks, Muslims of native Spanish stock, native Christians. Islam was overextended in Spain; it thus made its accommodation with its habitat, ruled with a light touch. At its zenith in the tenth and eleventh centuries, it was to fashion a society of tranquillity and brilliance. Its cities thrived. Córdoba's population approximated a quarter million people; it was unmatched by any European city of the time. Its only rivals were the cities of Baghdad and Constantinople. The economy of Muslim Spain boomed, tied as it was to the larger Muslim economy. The Jews came into their own during these two centuries of prosperity. Literacy spread; Jewish academies opened in Córdoba, Granada, Toledo, Barcelona. Hispano-Arabic culture thrived in the cities of the south. A rich body of Judeo-Arabic philosophy was to become the distinctive gift of this age. Spanish Jewry declared its intellectual independence from the religious authority of the Iraqi academies that had been pre-eminent down through the ages. The Arabs had prided themselves on their poetry and literature; the Jews were to run a close race.

This was a world in flux, an ideal setting for a community of outsiders. There was room for talent; it was easy for Jews to find their way into all walks of public life. "No office, except that of the ruler, seemed to be out of the reach of a talented and ambitious Jew," Norman Stillman writes in his historical survey, *The Jews in Arab Lands*. Success at court was not without its hazards though. It called forth its steady companion—the wrath of the crowd. A Jew by the name of Samuel ben Naghrela was the ruler's minister in the Berber kingdom of Granada until his death in 1056. Ten years later his son, Joseph, was crucified by a mob on the city's main gate in an anti-Jewish riot. The father had risen on his own: he knew the hazards of success. The son had taken success for granted. He was, says one chronicle, "proud to his own hurt and the Berber princes were jealous of him." This riot was the first massacre of Jews in Muslim Spain. The date was December 30, 1066. About 1,500 families perished in that riot.

No measure of cultural brilliance would compensate for the political fragility of the edifice. A Muslim poet of Granada may have intuited the weakness underneath the cultural glitter when he wrote that he had "the fault of rising in the West." The Muslims had conquered the plains and the Mediterranean coast. The mountains in the north, the poorer regions of old Castile, were in Christian hands. This set the stage for a bloody and long struggle.

Trouble came to paradise as the eleventh century drew to a close. The Jews were caught between the pressures of the Reconquista and a Muslim society awakening to a new sense of vulnerability—and intolerance. Moses Ben Maimon, better known as Maimonides (1131-1204), the great figure of medieval Jewish life, quit his native birthplace in Córdoba and sought shelter in Cairo. (Maimonides became a luminary in the life of Cairo; he rose to become the physician of Saladin.) A yearning for Zion, for life in the land of Israel, was to find its way into the poetry of the time. The "Golden Age" of the Jews of Muslim Spain had drawn to a close. Small messianic Jewish movements made their appearance—an expression of the malaise of the Jews as the Andalusian cocoon was to be torn asunder.

Little was to remain of the Moorish realms in the peninsula. Toledo had been lost in 1085; Córdoba itself in 1236, Valencia in 1238, Seville two years later. By 1264 all that remained were Granada and its surroundings. That Muslim foothold was spared because the warring kingdoms to its north—Castile, Aragon, Navarre,

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Portugal—had been busy with their own feuds. Reconquista remained in abeyance, while Granada became a veritable protectorate of Castile. The loss of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 would help focus the attention of Christendom on Granada. Granada would now become a matter of faith rather than realpolitik. The unification of Castile and Aragon under Ferdinand and Isabella sealed Granada's fate.

III.

Hope had deluded the Jews in the domains of Ferdinand and Isabella. The Crown, traditionally the protector of the Jews against the Church and townsmen, would be more audacious now. The Jews would be dispossessed and fed to the mob in the service of royal absolutism.

Pick up the trail a good century before the Inquisition and Edict of Expulsion: over the course of that pivotal century the place of the Jews in Spain had become untenable. The Jews farmed the taxes of the state; they were the ideal scapegoat for all the disgruntled. The mob and the priests who led the mob in intermittent outbursts against the Jews saw a Jewish conspiracy behind every cruel turn of fate. Jewish physicians were carrying poison under their fingernails, Jewish sorcerers were everywhere, a Jewish cabal was out to undo Christianity.

The Jewish world was hit with great ferocity in a wave of massacres that took place in 1391. The troubles began in Seville and spread to Córdoba, Valencia, and Barcelona. Before the great terror subsided, some 25,000 may have been killed. A new law was passed in 1412: the so-called "Ordinance on the Enclosure of the Jews and Moors" at Valladolid. The Jews were now to wear a distinctive yellow garment; Jews and Moors were banned from serving as spice dealers, tax farmers, moneylenders, physicians, or surgeons; they were to live in separate enclosures locked and guarded at night. A massive wave of conversion was to take place in 1412-15.

Baptism bought time for those who chose it. But now a new crisis threatened. Where they had been a people apart, the sin of the Jews was separation. Now it was their assimilation that agitated their enemies. The Grand Inquisitor doing his work in the 1480s would claim that he was hunting crypto-Jews among the *conversos*. We know better now, thanks to the able work of the Israeli historian Benzion Netanyahu. In a book titled *The Marranos of Spain* Netanyahu turns the story inside out. Conversion had worked, it had depleted the Jewish world and increased the self-confidence of the *conversos*: they were no longer a minority who had gone astray; they now outnumbered the Jews of the realm.

Mobility denied the Jews was now theirs. They flocked into professions from which they had been excluded—the law, the army, the universities, the church. One rabbi, Solomon Levi, christened as Paul de Santa Maria, rose to become bishop of Burgos. The Talmudist Joshua Halorqi left Judaism for the Church, took the name Jeronimo de Santa Fe, and became a zealous advocate of his new faith. By 1480 half the important offices in the court of Aragon were occupied by *conversos* or their children. The great energy of the *conversos* rankled the Jews, increasing numbers of whom dispensed with the cherished notion that the *conversos* were *anusim* (forced ones) who were destined to return to the faith. More important, though, it galvanized the forces that sought the eradication of the Jewish presence in Spain. If the Jews had slipped through the gate as converts, they had to be banished and destroyed. The line had to be redrawn. Tomás de Torquemada, the priest who was the evil genius of the Inquisition, knew where he was heading. The *conversos* and those who remained true to the Jewish faith may have taken two separate paths. In one swift, terrible decade, Torquemada would bring them together. The Inquisition in 1481 against the *conversos*, the Edict of Expulsion in 1492.

IV.

A tale of dubious authenticity has the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512) wondering about Ferdinand and about the folly of his expulsion of the Jews: "Do they call this Ferdinand a wise prince who impoverishes his kingdom and thereby enriches mine?" The tale aside, the lands of Islam provided safe havens for the Jews. The gates of many Muslim realms were opened before the Sephardim. The new lands were eager to accommodate them, as they brought with them new skills in the making of weaponry and gunpowder, in printing and medicine. They knew the languages of Europe. In the great struggle of the age between Islam and Christendom the Jews found a reprieve. For the rulers of the Ottoman Empire the Jews were ideal subjects.

By the standards of Europe in the High Middle Ages, the world of Islam was, on the whole, a tolerant world. It was not an "interfaith utopia" (to borrow the words of the distinguished historian of Islam Bernard Lewis). The life the Jews led was circumscribed. It was a life without illusions. There was a clear division of labor; political power, careers in the bureaucracy and the military were off limits. There was a body of discriminatory law: houses of worship could not be built higher than mosques; Jews and Christians were often required to wear distinctive garb. They could not bear arms or ride horses. They had to pay higher taxes than those paid by Muslims.

And some Muslim realms were harder than others. Morocco stood out in the degradation it heaped upon the Jews. Here Islam was frontier Islam, embittered by wars against Portugal and Spain. The Jews were the only non-Muslim community in Morocco. The limits imposed upon them—enclosed ghettos that functioned like the Juderias of Aragon and Castile—recalled the degradations of Europe. The Jews of Morocco lived at the mercy of the elements. It was feast or famine. Merciful sultans alternated with cruel ones. What the sultans gave, the preachers and the crowd frequently took away. The protection the rulers offered in this wild and anarchic realm could never withstand what one historian

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described as the three miseries of Morocco: plague, famine, and civil war.

It was easier in other Muslim lands. The private domain Islamic rule conceded, the freedom from forced conversions must have seemed particularly generous when compared with what prevailed in medieval Europe. A Jew writing to his co-religionists in Europe described Turkey as a land where "every man may dwell at peace under his own vine and fig tree." The Jews were a people on the run. The tolerance in the new surroundings seemed wondrous. A *converso* who made a new life in Turkey and returned to the faith spoke of Turkey in nearly messianic terms, described it as "a broad expansive sea which our Lord has opened with the rod of his mercy. Here the gates of liberty are wide open for you that you may fully practice your Judaism."

Jewish centers of learning and commerce sprouted throughout the Muslim world. Salonika, conquered by the Turks early in the 1400s, was to become, for all practical purposes, a Jewish city. Jews became the city's overwhelming majority. They dominated the life of the city until its loss to the Greeks in 1912. A substantial Jewish colony laid roots in Istanbul. The town of Safed, in Palestine, attracted Jewish textile makers and scholars, and became a famous center of learning. Close by there was a protected niche for the Jews in the life of Egypt. Baghdad's Jewry was perhaps in a league by itself. It had its academies, a vigorous mercantile elite with far-flung commercial operations.

Then the world of the Jews of Islam closed up. It happened over a long period of time. The civilization of Islam itself went into eclipse, its Ottoman standard-bearers were overtaken by Europe in the seventeenth century. The Jews who had done well by civilization in the midst of a surge were to suffer its demise. Increasingly the Christian European powers set the terms of the traffic with Islamic lands. For intermediaries these European powers preferred the local Christian communities—Greeks, Armenians, Christian Arabs. And these local Christians were sworn enemies of the Jews, bent on cutting them out of international commerce and diplomacy. The knowledge—of foreign languages, of science and medicine—that Jews had brought with them from Europe had receded and been rendered obsolete. European missions were busy at work shoring up the skills and the privileges of the Christians of the "east." On the defensive, the Islamic order itself was growing increasingly xenophobic and intolerant. The submission to Europe had to be hidden under displays of chauvinism. The Jews of Islam headed into a long night. The center of the Jewish world had long shifted westward. Lewis sums up the closing of that Jewish world in the east in his book *The Jews of Islam*: "The growing segregation, the dwindling tolerance, the *diminished* participation, the worsening poverty, both material and intellectual, of the Jewish communities under Muslim rule."

From this long slumber the Jews of the east were awakened by a movement fashioned by their kinsmen in the west: modern Zionism. It came calling on them, summoned them to a new undertaking. The Jews of Islam had been spared both the gift of modern European history (the Enlightenment, the bourgeois age, the emancipation) and then the horrors visited on European Jewry. Zionism had been spun with European thread. But the Jews of the east took to it. To be sure, there were many who had wanted to sit out the fight between Arab and Jew in Palestine and to avert their gaze. Some of the leading figures of Egyptian Jewry—the chief Rabbi Haim Nahum, the head of the community, a banker by the name of Joseph Aslan de Cattaoui Pasha whose family had presided over the community since the mid-nineteenth century—were men devoted to "king and country" who had wanted nothing to do with Zionism. But the ground burned in Egypt. Fascist doctrines of nationalism and a new Islamic militancy were sweeping through the place. Palestine and the struggle between Arab and Jew were too close: the world of Egyptian Jewry couldn't withstand all of this.

It was now past living those circumscribed lives. Modern nationalism—in its Arab and Jewish variants—blew away the world of the Arab Jews. The braver and younger souls among the Jews of Arab lands didn't care to live the quiet and worried lives of their elders. When the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948-49 opened, there were some 800,000 Jews in the Arab world; some 6 percent of world Jewry. A decade or so later, *harat al Yahud* (the Jewish quarter) in Muslim cities belonged to memory. The large Jewish communities in Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, packed up and left. There was a new and altered geography of Jewish life: the center of gravity had shifted again, toward two poles: the New World and Israel.

Setting sail to the New World, Columbus had had little to say about that parallel "fleet of woe and misery" that carried the Jews out of Spain. He was careful to note, though, that he wanted the Jews excluded from the lands he would discover and claim for Spain. Fate mocked him.

V.

It came to pass that in the midst of the retrospects and the celebration and the rampant revisionism of the quincentennial of Columbus's voyage of discovery, Arabs and Jews at an impasse came together in Madrid in October 1991. (Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's deputy foreign minister, went to Madrid; his father, the distinguished historian Benzion Netanyahu, had chronicled the heartbreak of the Jews of Spain and the shattering of their world.) It was a "good venue," the innocent said of Madrid, the right place for Muslims and Jews to come together. Perhaps it was. The Spanish certainly thought so; the great irony would have been too much for them to ponder. Beyond the tumult of the conference and its utterances, those in the know, though, could have sworn that they could hear both the Moor's last sigh and the parting words of hurt and pride of Don Isaac Abravanel, and that plea that fell on deaf ears. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Yes, 'JFK' Again

On March 3 at Town Hall in New York, I attended a "town meeting" (capacity crowd) on "Hollywood & History: The Debate Over JFK." It was sponsored by the Nation Institute and the Center for American Culture Studies of Columbia University, together with the Writers Guild of America, East. Victor Navasky, editor of *The Nation*, was the host.

One reason I was interested was that *The Nation* evidently wanted to offer something more than the views on *JFK* that it had originally presented. In its January 20 issue, Andrew Kopkind wrote, speaking of Oliver Stone's creation of myth rather than faithful reconstruction of history: "Certainly he has every right to do what he does." As precedent he cited John Ford's documentary *December Seventh*, which fiddles with fact: "It was a great film and brilliant propaganda, which is to say, what movies ought to be." Stuart Klawans, the magazine's film critic, noted that *The New York Times* and *Newsweek* had accused Stone of having "twisted the truth" and commented: "I should hope so. That's what filmmakers do, if they're any good."

Flat as those two pronouncements are, they are not flatly mistaken. Still, *The Nation* had evidently decided to give the factual side a hearing. To this end, Norman Mailer, Nora Ephron, and Stone himself had been invited to uphold artistic license while Edward Jay Epstein, Max Holland, and Christopher Hitchens, among others, were to speak for fact.

Mailer read from his *Vanity Fair* review of the film, which is the loudest carol I know to the mythmaking potential of *JFK* and which is the usual Mailerian mix of unique insight and self-inflation. Ephron saw fit to posit herself as analogue to Stone, reminding us that in 1983 she and Alice Arlen had written the screenplay of *Silkwood* and had been censured for tampering with fact. The relation of the single-strand, linear, small-scale *Silkwood* to the complex and far-ranging *JFK* seemed tenuous, but Ephron invoked the writer's need to "impose a narrative" as the bond between her (with Arlen) and Stone.

Not to itemize each talk, I note that Epstein posed some serious questions of fact, as did Holland. Hitchens weighed in with (he apparently thought) shocking disclosures about Joseph P. Kennedy's career, the Kennedy support of Joe McCarthy, and President Kennedy's liaison with a Mafia concubine. Stone replied that those matters predated the period of the film, that, for *JFK*, only JFK's views on Vietnam were pertinent.

In general, Stone stood staunchly by statements he had previously published, with variations and emphases that the questions provoked, saying basically that he had been chiefly concerned to draw attention to unanswered questions and to create a countermyth aimed at the official mythology about the assassination. One topic new to me had to do with Jim Garrison. Stone was asked why he had prettified Garrison's character; he replied that there hadn't been time to do anything else. His film runs three hours as it is, said Stone. It would have had to run six hours in order to deal with all the vagaries of Garrison's character. (Stone didn't mention whether the prettifying had anything to do with a need to please Kevin Costner.)

The debate arrived just about where anyone could have predicted: nowhere. Nonetheless, it was important. First, and most obviously, because it was held at all. How many events in art today, other than the ones attacked by Jesse Helms, evoke such a sense of the proprietary, pro or con? "This film belongs to me, exactly in the light and aspect in which I see it," seemed the unspoken text of the panelists and the highly engaged audience, "so keep your figurative hands off."

Second, more than this meeting was involved. I was in France in January when *JFK* was released there and saw enough of the response to know that, added to the incredible American response, this picture is a kind of vitalizing force. There and here I sensed a subtext almost of surprise in many commentators, other than film critics, that they had been so touched to admiration or dislike of a film. Surely the subject itself is part of the reason; but I'd insist that Stone's art, his very extravagances, are also part.

For myself, the Town Hall debate confirmed that I'm a complete mirror-reactor on this subject. When someone defends the factual distortions and spec-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Daughters of the Dust. *Julie Dash, a black writer-director, makes her feature debut with a lovely visual ballad about Sea Island blacks in 1902. A bit long and diffuse, but the work of a real talent. (Reviewed 2/10/92)* **Howards End.** *A satisfactory adaptation of the great novel, magnificently acted by Vanessa Redgrave, Emma Thompson, Anthony Hopkins, and (surprise!) Helena Bonham Carter. James Ivory's direction makes the most of the lush visual texture without overload. (3/23/92)* **JFK.** *Historically rickety but passionately made, Oliver Stone's inquiry into the assassination manages to be both an outcry against Vietnam and a glossary of American conspiracy nightmares. (1/27/92)* **Othello.** *A newly printed and recorded version of the 1952 Orson Welles film. Ultimately it all collapses because of Welles's vapid Moor. Still, for collectors of Welles . . . (3/9/92)* **—SK**

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ulations in the film, I worry about those viewers who can't detect them. For instance, Ephron mentioned that some people fret because younger people will get their notions about the Joint Chiefs of Staff from *JFK*, and she said blithely, "What if they do?" In time, she said, they can learn more and change their ideas. Would she have felt the same about young people getting their ideas on Vietnam from *The Green Berets* or on McCarthyism from *My Son John*?

When the strict constructionists attack the film, I think of its artistry, of artistic license, and of what I still believe was Stone's root reason for making it: Vietnam. Thin though the demonstrable connection may be between the murder and the war's extension, that connection ostensibly exists in Stone's mind; and I can only feel sympathy with anyone who wants to remind us of that bloodbath and the official hugger-mugger that protracted it.

Personal note: the Vietnam connection was underscored for me at the debate because twenty-six years ago, almost to the day, I chaired a meeting in that hall at which two dozen writers, including Mailer, voiced their strong opposition to the Vietnam War.

More in the *JFK* area. **Ruby** (Triumph) is a biographical film about Lee Harvey Oswald's killer. The screenplay was adapted by Stephen Davis, an Englishman, from a play of his that was produced in London. There will never be a debate, at Town Hall or elsewhere, about this picture. The producer says, "Though we felt that as a whole, the movie required fidelity to key historical events, places, and characters, the pieces of the mosaic did not have to correspond precisely with the records." Unlike *JFK*, about which the same statement might possibly be made, *Ruby* puts forward no serious counterhistory, no questioning of accepted facts: it only exploits and embroiders them.

Ruby, a strip-joint operator in Dallas, is steeped in past and present crime. Also, he has both CIA and Mafia involvements. The only decent thing he does in the film is to befriend a young battered wife (a composite of several women, we're told). He gives her a chance in his club: she turns out to be an experienced stripper and is a hit. She moves up to Las Vegas where, one night, she services JFK himself. She's a hit there, too, and is transported to Washington for further presidential servicing, but runs back to Dallas and Ruby when she is asked to carry Mafia threats to JFK.

Mafia hit men are in Dealey Plaza that day, because, though the Mafia claims it helped elect JFK, his brother Robert is out to bust them. Oswald is at his window, but he doesn't handle his rifle. The gun is fired by a young Cuban friend of his who used to be Ruby's bartender and is enraged at JFK because he has not removed Castro. Ruby stews after the shooting, then, admitted to the garage by police pals, he shoots Oswald.

The chief trouble with the script, fantasy aside, is that the painfully detailed first four-fifths of the film have absolutely no connection with Ruby's final action. After all the stuff about the Mafia and CIA has been burrowed through, Ruby kills Oswald only because he feels he's a nobody and wants to be a somebody.

It's never clear what we're supposed to be feeling about Ruby. Is he a villain, a victim, a murderer who redeems himself, or what? Danny Aiello contends valiantly with the part. At least he creates a man so far down on the moral scale that he can look at the killings and other crimes of his past simply as the tribulations of existence. •

The curious postwar history of modern design.

Form and Formica

BY JED PERL

The couple of decades after World War II were an optimistic and unpredictable period in the history of modern design. Already in the 1930s a streamlined, less-is-more approach had been recognized as *the* modern style. After the war, the people who designed furniture, textiles, graphics, dishes, appliances, and utensils began to take that modern style as a given, and to play around with it. How one felt about these variations (these betrayals, some would say) of an aesthetic that had been defined at the Bauhaus in the early 1920s depended a lot on who one was. Young married couples were pleased that Bauhaus style (which they might recognize but be unable to name) was within their price range. Highbrows wondered, however, what the world was coming to when Kandinsky's outerspaces turned up on hot pink formica tabletops in greasy spoons.

The period between 1945 and 1960 was modern design's variations-on-a-theme period—and some of the variations were carried so far or carried off so carelessly that they were really inversions. True, this was the time when modern design became comfortable, utterly domestic, and produced a great bourgeois style, Danish modern. But it was also in this period that modern design came down with a case of the rococo sillies and spilled out kidney-bean-shaped everything.

For years, baby boomers have been scouring the thrift shops and the flea markets for the props that go along with their childhood-in-suburbia memories (or fantasies). Now these memories and fantasies are at the front of our consciousness. The revival encompasses much more than design. James Wolcott, in a recent review of John Cheever's journals, ties the vogue for Cheever and his stories of commuter trains, manicured lawns, and too many martinis into changing feelings about the postwar years. Wolcott says that the origins of the Cheever boom are "psychological-spiritual. It's a way of romancing and reclaiming the dead father in the Age of Recovery." Fifties design is ubiquitous, and the camp infatuation with it is a variation that turns the romance into a comic romp. Just look at the biomorphic-shaped nesting tables sold at Conran's, the sherbet-bright colors in advertisements and on TV, the interior design and fashion spreads in the glossy magazines.

Last fall Barney's, the New York clothes store, sent out an advertising brochure that summed up the whole return-to-the-'50s sensibility. In the Barney's layouts, a flotilla of rather mature-looking male models in sober suits marches off to what one imagines are serious jobs in the city, while a solitary lady in a well-tailored suit and hat and gloves primps and preens, all set for a gal's day in town. The brochure is a send-up of the surfaces of Cheever's commuter-train world, but it's only half irreverent. The people at Barney's understand that upper-middle-class baby boomers want to mirror their upper-middle-class Moms and Dads, though in a stylized, mythologized form. Uptight

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style, with all its careful tailoring and spit-and-polish, is being given sex appeal.

Nor is this the only side of current fashion that ties into the obsession with postwar styles. The biker jackets and the studded black leather everything that Karl Lagerfeld has been using to jazz up the Chanel look are '50s-based; it's a somewhat satirical resurrection of the Marlon Brando-juvenile delinquent dimension of the Eisenhower years. Meanwhile, in New York this winter, every guy under 50 who isn't wearing a business suit is wearing some version of a baseball cap—another piece of nostalgia chic.

Treated reverently, '50s style can suggest second thoughts about the youth revolt of the '60s. Treated irreverently, the same design elements are an announcement that the insurrection is alive and well. You don't have to like Ike in order to appreciate the lightness, the friendly irony, of '50s design. There's a growing interest in a period when the heroic age of modern art had just turned into a designer's playground. The '50s stuff that people began picking up in the thrift shops a decade or two ago is now in the antique stores and the museums.

Nostalgia long ago turned into retro fever, and now retro fever is giving a push to scholarship. A major catalog of the work of Charles and Ray Eames came out in 1989; and the catalog of a show at the Victoria and Albert in London devoted to the Italian designer Piero Fornasetti has been published in the United States. Children's books by Paul Rand and his wife, Ann, that first appeared in the '50s are being reprinted. A show called "Design 1935-1965: What Modern Was" is touring the country, and its catalog includes works by more than 100 artists and designers. This easy-going, pleasingly eclectic exhibition begins in the pre-World War II period, but I think it's fair to say that the emotional center of both the book and the show is the postwar years.

The exhibition's quizzically ironic title can be taken in several ways. The show's organizers (at the Museum of Decorative Art in Montreal) probably mean to say that modern design, which often achieved its distinctive future-tense look by rejecting any elements that suggested historical style, is now definitely a phenomenon of the past. This big, absorbing compilation of dishes and furniture and textiles and appliances, which ranges from Charles Eames chairs to Tupperware and psychedelic posters, is a style orgy and a walk down memory lane. Visitors may be familiar with some of the objects—the dishes by Russel Wright, with their melting but slightly clunky shapes; the pedestal chairs and tables of Eero Saarinen, with their sweeping white lines and amusingly cool corporate look. Depending on their ages, museum-goers or their parents or other relatives may have owned or still own some of these objects. Other works, such as a rug after a design by Matisse, were never within the reach of many people. Some of this stuff still looks pretty impressive, some of it looks as bad as it ever looked, and some of the dreck has a second life as kitsch.

This exhibition has a tonic effect. Going through it, one understands how many different kinds of experience and sensibility modernism encompasses, as an idea and an ideal. Everything that's included could be said to consist of responses to (and misunderstandings of) the revolution in style that stretched from the art nouveau of the late nineteenth century to the reconstruction of the material world that was proposed at the Bauhaus in the 1920s. The post-World War II designers who seem to dominate the show are already, in their various ways, wondering what modern was, so that the whole show becomes a meditation on an idea that the century had lost almost as soon as it had been found.

Design 1935-1965: What Modern Was
edited by Martin Eidelberg
(Abrams, 416 pp., $49.50)

Eames Design: The Work of the Office of Charles and Ray Eames
by John Neuhart
and Marilyn Neuhart and Ray Eames
(Abrams, 456 pp., $95)

Sparkle and Spin
by Ann and Paul Rand
(Abrams, 32 pp., $16.95)

Fornasetti: Designer of Dreams
by Patrick Mauries
(Bulfinch, 288 pp., $85)

Charles Eames (1907-78) is a central figure in "What Modern Was." His molded plywood furniture, shown at the Museum of Modern Art in 1946 and produced by the Herman Miller Company, is one of the essential icons of the period. In the following decades, Eames worked variations on those body-fitting shapes in fiberglass and cast metal and wire mesh. Eames was a graduate of the Cranbrook Institute in Michigan, which was for decades America's premier design academy; and in the period when he was first showing his furniture at the Museum of Modern Art, the design department—under the direction of Edgar J. Kaufmann Jr., who had influenced his father's decision to commission Frank Lloyd Wright to do his great Fallingwater house—was very concerned with bringing good taste to middle-class Americans.

Although the Eames models were always too expensive for the average—even the average middle-class—American, the Eames shapes became ubiquitous through the many copycat versions that appeared. The design studio that Eames ran for decades in California in collaboration with his wife, Ray—who had studied with Hans Hofmann in the 1930s—helped to shape America's idea of what a well-designed office, school, shop, or airport ought to look like. And the 1956 Eames lounge chair, in rosewood, leather, and metal, is probably the most comfortable of all famous pieces of modern furniture.

The Eames office was involved with much more than furniture. They designed interiors, and in later years they spent a good deal of time on educational slide shows, films, and mixed media exhibits. These were seen at the 1964 New York World's Fair, in schools, as part of the United States Bicentennial Celebrations. The house that they built for themselves in Santa Monica Canyon in 1949 as part of a Case Study House project sponsored by *Art & Architecture* magazine was meant as a model for the industry. The building, a constructivist design created entirely of industrial materials, was dominated by right angles and modular metal elements. But over the years the Eameses filled it with colored walls and lots of folk art and pretty clutter, so that the house became a demonstration that modern design could be humanized, made relaxed and domestic and cheerful.

In Eames's view the early modern idea that design arose out of some sort of nearly mystical relationship with the community at large was not entirely lost. But unlike the early modern designers, who had a distant or nonexistent relation to the industrial world from which they often drew their inspiration, Eames was working at a time when it was possible to see good design as part of a give-and-take in the real, capitalist world. Eames wanted to take modern design out of its utopian prewar phase, and so he spoke of bringing the client—and here he meant, I think, a corporate client—into the creative process.

Interestingly, it seems that some of Eames's projects were developed before there actually was a client: the idea of the client may be said to be, among other things, an ideal. In reality there were two kinds of clients: those who licensed and produced what the designers designed, and those who ultimately used the products. The catalog of "What Modern Was"

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contains informative thumbnail essays not only on designers but also on manufacturers, so that one has a sense of the importance of these companies, which were sometimes the free-lance designer's only clients. The companies turned prototypes into products; and it is characteristic of the design work of the period that as often as not we associate a particular item not with a designer but with a company: an ice bucket is a Dansk design, a chair is by Knoll or Herman Miller.

Eames liked to go to the circus, and over the years he took thousands of photographs of the performers and the tents. He saw the circus as a metaphor for the design process. He admired the way that circus performers use specialized skills to appeal to a wide audience: they're artists who thrive on the pressures of popular entertainment. "The circus," Eames said,

> is a nomadic society which is very rich and colorful but which shows apparent license on the surface.... Everything in the circus is pushing the possible beyond the limit.... Yet, within this apparent free-wheeling license, we find a discipline which is almost unbelievable.

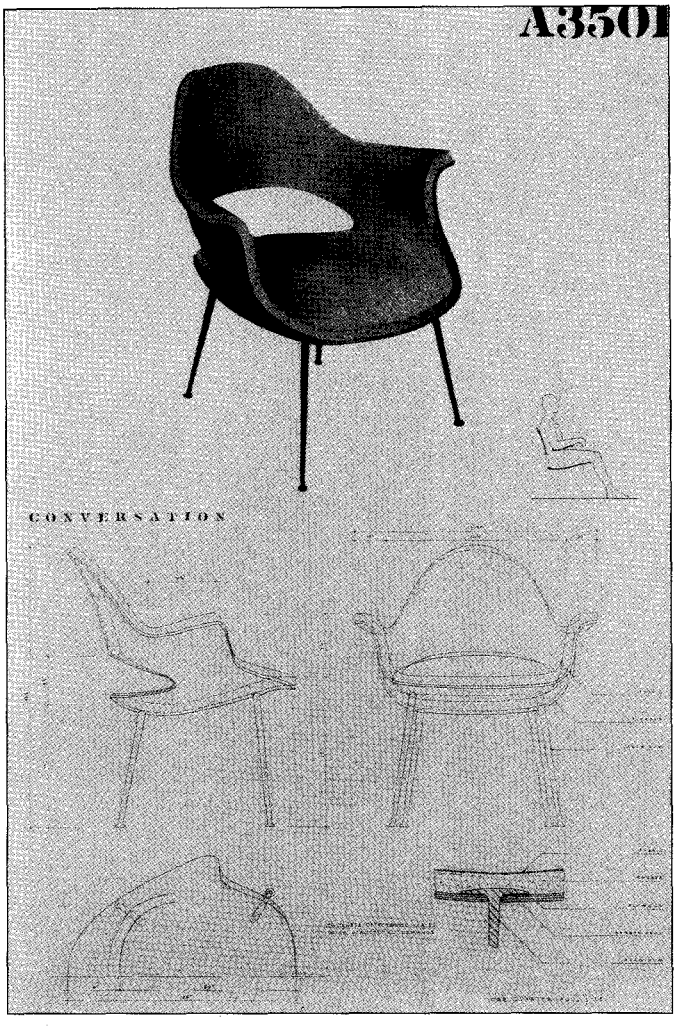
In his circus photographs, Eames liked to focus on the details that underpin the spectacle—the feet of performers, the framework of the tent. And the work of the Charles and Ray Eames design office, when contemplated as a totality, looks like a related mix of splashy spectacle and attention to detail. Eames's furniture has a quality of grace under pressure—and of the playful application of physics and engineering—that relates to the daring elegance of an acrobatic performance. These furnishings are the stars of the Eames design firm; and the rest of their work—the decks of playing cards, the storage units, the toys, the film strips and slide shows—is a little like the decor at a circus, an amusing play of colors, patterns, textures.

Postwar design is the all-the-world's-a-circus period of modern design. If there is a message, it is that the designed world should have an easy but not an aimless flow, that it should unite sentiment with sound principles. Danish modern furniture is meant to fit into the pattern of ordinary life—the shapes, often gently curved, will look fine in many different arrangements. The interiors are asymmetrical, the colors are warm and bright. It's a relaxed, domestic style.

After the war, there were neither nannies or nurseries. Children were seen and heard, and the whole house was turned into a playpen. Charles and Ray Eames designed their "House of Cards," which is decorated with a bazaar of photographs of patterns and all manner of amusing things. The cards are notched so that they can be put together into various kinds of structures; this is a plaything for everybody to share, which makes it characteristic of the kids-oriented 1950s. The Eameses designed a number of other toys as well as furnishings for children. Modern art had always been praised for its childlike qualities, but only in the postwar period were modern art and design marketed for their child-friendly or childlike qualities. (One of the virtues of Danish modern, certainly, was that it was largely child-proof.) And a number of the most celebrated postwar graphic design styles echo children's art. Joseph Low—who designed record and book jackets and did illustrations for books for adults and kids—perfected a style that was scratchy and nervous and birdlike, a kind of quirky doodling. Antonio Frasconi's woodcuts, which often represented the neighborly side of city life—with whole families sitting out on the brownstone stoop—were bold, warm, slyly folk-artish.

Paul Rand was another major designer who did some work for children. Two of the children's books that he produced in the '50s in collaboration with his wife have just been reprinted in impressive facsimile editions. *Sparkle and Spin* (1957) is cheerful and clever and casual and ever so elegant. The cover, with a few elements set against a black ground, transforms that black into a sort of joyfully mysterious universe through which a stylized hand twirling a top, a few lopsided lines of type, and a couple of white snowflakes dance and careen. Over the years Paul Rand, who became a professor of graphic design at Yale in 1956 and has been associated with the school ever since, has done work—including the design of logos—for ABC, IBM, Westinghouse, and UPS. He is an intellectual of modern design—an inheritor of the tradition of applying the principles of modern art to modern design, a tradition that first evolved at the Bauhaus in the 1920s.

The text of *Sparkle and Spin*, by Ann Rand, is a primer on the power of words. "Words," children will learn on the very first page, "are how what you think inside comes out/and how to remember what you might forget about." Paul Rand illustrates this thought with a collage of a kid in a hat: the hat is made of a triangle of newspaper, the kid's eye is the letter O, and out of the kid's mouth spill, in different typefaces, the letters that spell w-O-R-d-S. These bold designs are very deliberate, very carefully planned. The O in "words" is in the same type as the O that makes up the kid's eye. His illustrations—most of which are collages and paper cutouts—make use of the whole bag of tricks that he's picked up from the European artists of the first half of the century. There are echoes of the suavely curving Matisse paper cutouts (which weren't a decade old in 1957), of the old-fashioned engravings and typefaces that



CONVERSATION ARMCHAIR,
DESIGNED BY CHARLES EAMES AND EERO SAARINEN, 1940

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turn up in the collages of Schwitters and the cubists, of the jumpy rhythms of color shapes that fill the paintings of Léger and Mondrian.

It's an important anthology of modern design ideas. Still, the interest of *Sparkle and Spin* today has less to do with the way the book falls into a tradition of modern design than with the way it plays around with and spoofs that tradition. The book has an insouciance about it that is light-years away from the mood of early twentieth-century design, even from early twentieth-century design for children. It's by no means easy to explain the difference, but I would say that it has to do with a certain irony that Rand introduces into his designs. Not that irony wasn't an element in the juxtapositions of the cubists, or in the pictographs of Klee; but in Rand's work, somehow, one feels that the artist is making jokes about the purity of modern art.

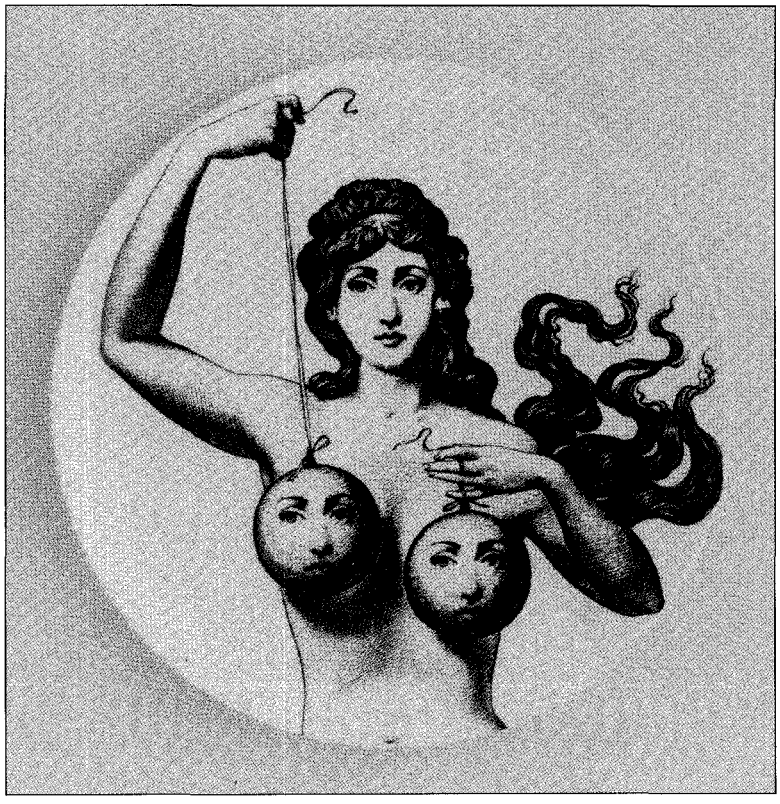
Some of the jokes have to do with off-key colors—with the way he'll juxtapose the pure statement of a red with the quirkiness of a salmon, as if to criticize the red, to say that this is a red that's had something done to it. Or he'll draw a few scratchy lines over a collage—a feather in a hat, for instance—that seem to chide the boldness of the collage. In these slidings-away from purism, from the bold center of modern art, Rand seems to carry us to the heart of postwar design, where the violence and intensity of classic modernism is tamed. We're getting into the sophistication of the Adlai Stevenson generation, a sophistication that keeps everything subdued, beyond the reach of utopian ideas and utopian illusions.

"What Modern Was" intermingles work by the designers who were inspired by early modern art with designs that the pioneering modernists themselves were doing after the war, when they were popularly revered as the elder statesmen of art. The show includes a rug by Matisse, textiles with designs by Calder, Léger, and Miró, glass and pottery by Picasso, tiles by Dali. This decorative work, which fashion-conscious Americans followed with considerable interest at the time, has received very little serious attention in recent decades. Much of it has been rejected as self-indulgent, not really serious, perhaps because we are wary of a side of Léger and Picasso and others that delights in cleverness and in broad, comically obvious effects. Even Matisse, the most aloof of the School of Paris oldtimers, lets down his hair and jokes around a bit in his blossoming, billowing cut-paper compositions.

The Europeans did limited edition prints because it was a way to make a lot of money fast. But it was not only that. Léger had always been interested in popular life and popular taste; in the '20s he'd praised the discrimination of the workingman who admires the beauty of a bicycle or a piece of machinery. So it was natural that he would want to decorate vast public surfaces, and it was not really surprising that he risked the ire of the French Communist Party, which he'd joined after the war, when he took church commissions in Assy and Audincourt because they offered him the possibility of filling large spaces with spectacularly colored designs in stained glass and mosaic.

Chagall's Jerusalem Windows; the ceilings that André Malraux commissioned for various Parisian sites from Chagall, Masson, and Braque; Matisse's chapel in Vence; Picasso's secular War and Peace chapel in Vallauris; the work done by Miró and Picasso and Arp and others for UNESCO in Paris; the large-scale sculpture of Henry Moore and Jacques Lipchitz and Giacometti and Calder: all of these works grew out of a serious attempt to fulfill modern art's dream of mass appeal.

In the decorative works of these aging School of Paris masters, we sometimes feel a craving for a beautifully designed world that parallels the upbeat spirit of American designers like Eames and Rand. Of course, describing it this way puts the cart before the horse; even Eames's circus metaphor has its origins in Europe. But when we're speaking of a period rather than a particular work of art, it's logical to look at broad stylistic and thematic affinities. After reading Eames on the circus, it's interesting to recall that among the characters that Matisse included in *Jazz*, his 1947 album of cut-paper pictures, which was originally going to be titled *Circus*, are a clown, a knife thrower, and a cowboy. The circus, a subject in art from Seurat in the 1880s to Calder in the 1920s, re-emerged everywhere after the war. In 1950 Léger created his own *Circus*, a splendid illustrated book with a text in which he implores readers, "Go to the circus. Leave your rectangles, your geometric windows, and go to the country of circles in action. It is so human to break through restraints, to spread out, to grow toward freedom."



PLATE, DESIGNED BY PIERO FORNASETTI, c. 1950-55

In the United States, ironically enough, it was often the artists who were most skeptical about all the talk of good design. New York's abstract expressionists were taking on (rather self-consciously at times) the old Parisian role of the misunderstood avant-garde, and they could be as persnickety about the wares at fancy stores such as Bonniers on Madison Avenue as Picasso's old pals in Montmartre had been about his alliance with the Ballets Russes crowd. In the 1950s abstract expressionism did become chic—high-fashion models were photographed in front of Pollocks. But by and large good design continued to draw its inspiration from the imagery of the pre-war world. And the American artists who became most actively involved in design were often men whose training and outlook had been formed in the pre-war years. This is certainly the case with the sculptor Isamu Noguchi, who had been Brancusi's assistant in Paris for six

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months in the late 1920s and produced, in addition to some tables for Herman Miller, a great series of paper lanterns and lamps. Noguchi began to develop his Akari lamps during a trip to Japan in 1951. The lamps—which hang from the ceiling or are mounted on simple metal frames—are Noguchi's way of reconsidering a traditional Japanese craft after the experience of Western constructivist and biomorphic form. Some of the Noguchi shapes are very simple; others are wittily unfolding and undulating forms that combine the rhythmic intensity of Brancusi's "Endless Column" with the lightness and transparency of the architecture of the Far East.

Piero Fornasetti, the Italian designer who covered all manner of objects (dishes, furniture, Venetian blinds) and surfaces (china, wood, metal) with images borrowed from old engravings, had his own way of bringing fantasy into contemporary life. His work is the epitome of 1950s rococo chic; and for Americans its popularity was tied into a love affair with the overripeness of Italy, a country that still seemed rather exotic in the years immediately after the war. His work has an element of imagination run riot not to be found in the best-known American designers. After his own fashion, he's attuned to the humorous side of modern art.

Fornasetti's work, which often juxtaposes faces or parts of faces and bodies for surreal effect, comes out of a collage sensibility, and it particularly recalls the pictures that Max Ernst made using nineteenth-century engravings. Black and white predominate; but Fornasetti also likes to use a lot of gold, and he will add dashes of deep red, blue, and green to the images in order to achieve an effect that's reminiscent of nineteenth-century hand-colored engravings. In the Fornasetti creations, the narrative and metaphorical aspects of the engravings are defused, so that the images have a flatter, bolder, more impersonal character than in those Ernst collages. By isolating a collage element—the rendering of an eye or a hand, a couple of lines of typography, the particular thickness or thinness of engraved lines, the density of the hatching—Fornasetti creates a decorative art that celebrates imagery for its own sake. His work proves that old images can be transformed not only through juxtaposition, but also through presentation pure and simple.

With good reason Fornasetti is thought of as a prototypically '50s designer, but as Fiona MacCarthy points out in a TLS review of the Fornasetti show at the Victoria and Albert in London, his work is in many ways a precursor of '60s style. In the new monograph there are pictures of Fornasetti interiors—bedrooms, bathrooms, a casino, and (best of all) a Milanese bar and patisserie, Dulciora—in which the overload of imagery creates a giddy, hallucinogenic effect. (The Dulciora interior includes a frieze of drunken monkeys.) "Chelsea," MacCarthy observes, "was Fornasettized to a remarkable extent by the early 1960s." And then

> by the middle 1960s it was all over. In a way, [Fornasetti] had been hoist with his petard.... Little hope for Fornasetti in the Carnaby Street context, with a multitude of pseudo-Fornasetti objects being sold in boutiques called "I Was Lord Kitchener's Valet and Gear." To his old aficionados, the real Fornasetti came to seem a bit embarrassing, a memento of that period in which the strange austerities gave way to strange excesses.

For some viewers, the Fornasetti style, with its witty neoclassical quotations, may also seem to prefigure the postmodern sensibility of the 1980s. Perhaps what this tells us is that the purity of modern design, long at risk and even under assault, has been collapsing into the condition we now call postmodernism for much of the past fifty years.

The wit of the Eames "House of Cards," the ironic edge in the designs of Paul Rand, the creepily surrealist framing of imagery in Fornasetti's work: all of this foreshadows in one way or another the Pop sensibility of the '60s. Long before anybody even imagined what the '60s were going to look like—or that modern was going to go postmodern—people were thinking that modern design should unbutton, should let down its hair. It was in the '50s that true believers in the International Style began seriously to reconsider art nouveau—which was modern design's romantic, intoxicated past. That old purist Le Corbusier used unpredictably curved forms in the chapel at Ronchamp (1950-55) and wrote an introduction to a picture book about Gaudí. At the Museum of Modern Art there were shows devoted to Gaudí (in 1957) and art nouveau (in 1960) that stand as major landmarks in the history of taste. The slim, elegant catalog of the Modern's Gaudí show—which was written by Henry-Russell Hitchcock, an early explicator of the less-is-more International Style—predates by scarcely a decade the discovery of art nouveau among the psychedelic generation.

Between Le Corbusier's reconsideration of Gaudí and the art nouveau-inspired posters for the Avalon and Fillmore dance halls in San Francisco there is an immense gulf, and then again almost no gulf at all. The connection has

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to do with the playfulness that is an essential element in postwar taste. It is the achievement of the "What Modern Was" show that it recaptures the visual climate of those lost times. *Eames Design*, the catalog of "What Modern Was," and the new Fornasetti monograph are terrific books for browsing: they give readers an unedited, wide-focus view of the past.

A painting or sculpture, no matter how good or bad, is always an exercise in autobiography, but the decorative arts, precisely because they force the designer to deny the autobiographical in favor of the practical, reflect what might be called the visual unconscious of an era. And as one contemplates this design past that was actually a part of one's growing up, period unconscious turns out to be an extension of one's own unconscious. People love to have their memories expanded, given concrete form. In retrospect, the cheerfully informal decor of the '50s turns out to flow straight into the aggressively hedonistic decor of the 1960s. To note the connection is not necessarily to pass judgment on either period, but the connection is there. It took a lot to turn the barbecues into be-ins—it took the Rolling Stones and Vietnam. But I wonder if a generation that had never been to a barbecue could have dreamed up a be-in. In the beginning there were daisy-decorated kitchens. After that, there was Flower Power. •

The Enforcer

BY ANDREW J. NATHAN

The Claws of the Dragon: Kang Sheng—the Evil Genius Behind Mao—and His Legacy of Terror in People's China by John Byron and Robert Pack

(Simon and Schuster, 560 pp., $27.50)

Who was Kang Sheng? Was he really, as *The Claws of the Dragon* claims, "the man Mao trusted more than any other," a man who could "control, even mesmerize Mao," "one of the most influential forces in modern China"? Is it really correct to believe that "next to Kang, Mao himself seems to shrink in importance and interest"?

Starting in 1927, Kang was one of the leaders in the small Communist underground in Shanghai, placed by Zhou Enlai in charge of a secret service that fought a running battle with the Kuomintang's police and conducted assassinations of Communist defectors. When the Communists pulled out of Shanghai, Kang went to Moscow for ideological training and allegedly cooperated with the NKVD in purging "hundreds" from among the visiting Chinese Communist cadres studying there. In 1937 he returned to China to become head of the Party School in Yan'an, the Communists' capital. A year later he was also appointed to head the intraparty security agency known as the Social Affairs Department, about whose work little is known.

The height of Kang's power as the Chinese Communist Party's secret police chief was past by the time the People's Republic was established in 1949. From 1949 to 1956, he was either physically or politically ill and out of power. By the time of the Great Leap Forward in 1958, he had returned to Mao's side, and although he did not occupy a high post, he was prominent in supporting Mao's call for the Leap. For the next several years he continued to serve as one of Mao's theoretical advisers, helping to devise the ideological rationale for the split with the Soviet Union, and helping, with Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, to generate the critique of "revisionist" trends in literature and art that led to the Cultural Revolution. At that time he persecuted a novelist and a philosophy professor, each of whom had promoted ideas that he deemed retrograde; later hundreds of victims were hounded in connection with each of these cases.

Kang reached a brief second peak of influence during the Cultural Revolution as a cat's paw of Mao's, without independent power. He was adviser to the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group and de facto head of the Party's Organization Department, reached protocol position No. 4 in the Communist hierarchy, and was elected to the Politburo Standing Committee. He helped launch the Red Guard movement at the Party School and at Peking University, exercised influence over the Party Investigation Department and the Ministry of Public Security, and (like several other CCP leaders) developed a private security force of 500 agents.

During this period, Kang took the lead in a number of intraparty persecutions, including those of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. Because of his knowledge of senior cadres' personnel histories, he knew whom to accuse plausibly of what, though the story is also told of his framing someone as a traitor simply because he thought the man looked like one. According to John Byron and Robert Pack, Kang "personally supervised ten special case groups that investigated the 'crimes' of 220 defendants from the very apex of the Communist Party." He also gave a talk to Red Guards from Inner Mongolia, who subsequently carried out a witch hunt that affected hundreds of thousands, and he had vaguely delineated ties to a purge in Yunnan Province that affected tens of thousands.

Byron and Pack conclude that more than 30,000 deaths were "directly attributable" to Kang, but it is not clear whether this number includes the deaths in Inner Mongolia and Yunnan, to which he is connected only indirectly, deaths that themselves exceeded 30,000 in number. Then in 1970 Kang was stricken with cancer. He was soon incapacitated and, although continuing to hold high office, ceased to play an important role. He died in 1975.

From these facts Byron and Pack—identified on the book jacket as a pseudonymous senior diplomat and a veteran investigative reporter—create a picture of Kang as "the creator of China's Gulag," "the godfather of the Cultural Revolution," China's Beria, "a purveyor of terror to the largest nation in history," "the most callous and unrestrained" among China's Communist rulers. They base their account heavily on an officially sponsored *Critical Biography of Kang Sheng* issued for internal circulation within the Party in 1982. In turn, the *Critical Biography* is a popularized version of material compiled by a "special case group" charged with justifying Kang's posthumous expulsion from the Chinese Communist Party in 1980. Like the documentation released within the Party after the purge of Liu Shaoqi, the fall of Lin Biao, and the arrest of the Gang of Four, the Kang Sheng dossier was issued because the subject commanded substantial prestige. Drawing on the ancient tradition of Chinese "praise-and-blame" historiography, such materials seek to blacken the subject's reputation in every possible

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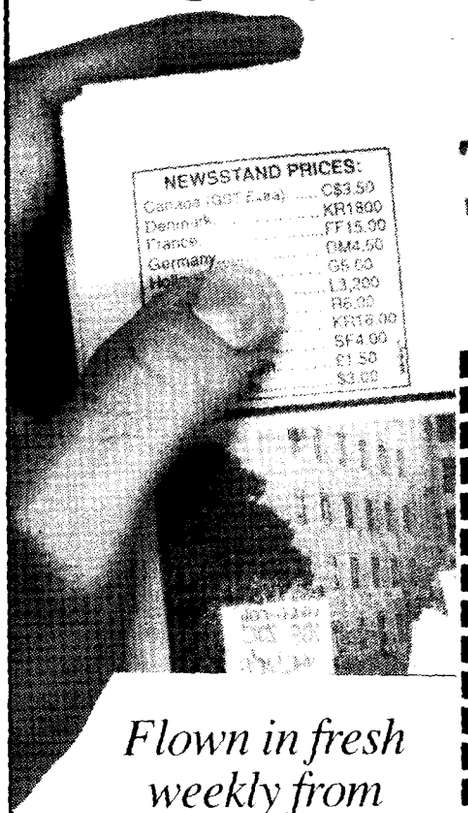

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way. The *Critical Biography* portrays Kang as not just on the losing side, but as a thoroughly bad egg: a roué from a landlord background, a selfish materialist who lacked human kindness, engaged in sexual license, betrayed his friends, and may have been a hidden traitor to the Party.

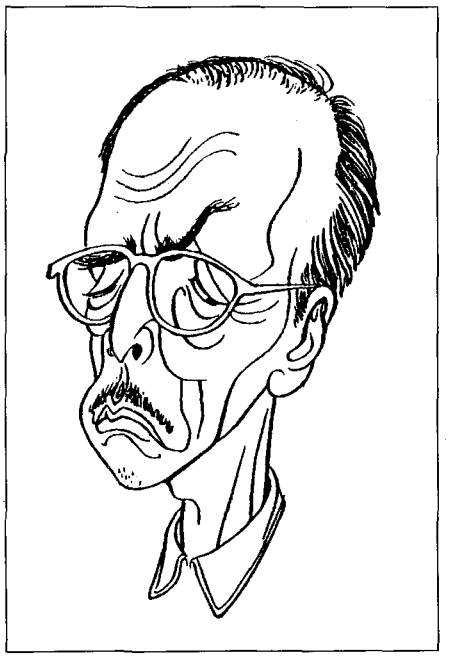
In such works, the subject's crimes are separated from historical context, and Byron and Peck perpetuate the error. Kang's relations with Zhou Enlai, his original patron in the Party, are hidden. Mao is portrayed as a victim, rather than as a beneficiary, of Kang's lies and deceits. Kang is made to appear a deviant from the Maoist system rather than a product of it.

Byron and Pack blacken the names of all those figures whom the CCP now blackens and paint in favorable terms the ones the Party praises. Zhou Enlai, Chen Yun, Peng Dehuai, and Liu Shaoqi receive sympathetic treatment, while Jiang Qing, Wang Ming, and Chen Boda are sneered at. These judgments are often conveyed through the use of potted physical descriptions. The propagandist Yao Wenyuan was "round-faced and rotund," and radical philosophy professor Nie Yuanzi was "a plump woman of 45." General He Long triumphs as "a heroic, dashing figure with a clipped mustache," and Deng Xiaoping is described favorably as "combative, energetic, and pushy."

The authors do supplement the *Critical Biography* with other sources, including interviews; but nearly all of them are with people who disliked Kang. Byron and Pack seem to believe that this adds to their informants' credibility. An interviewee who misremembered Kang's home province and his height is cited as the sole gospel for the controversial charge that it was Kang who betrayed five fellow Communists to the KMT police in 1931. An uncorroborated source subtitled *The Thief and the Prostitute* is used to prove that Kang was addicted to opium in the 1960s. And the authors labor even harder than their source to endow Kang with a deplorable sexual history.

Thus they expand two sentences in the *Critical Biography*, consisting of the Chinese equivalent of clichés like "Kang and his young friends painted the town red," into two pages filled with circumstantial detail of a "wild adolescence in Jiao county." They retail weakly founded rumors that Kang had an early sexual relationship with fellow Shandongese Jiang Qing. They call the rumors "plausible" because "Jiang Qing was a precocious girl" and "Kang had a reputation for sexual escapades." Later they state gratuitously that "whether [Kang and Jiang] resumed or developed a physical relationship in Yan'an remains a mystery."

They cite an unreliable book in Chinese called *Personalities of the Red Dynasty* to assert that in the 1930s Kang was frequently in and out of brothels. They speak of "rumored amorous escapades" during the 1950s with no cited evidence. They make much of his watching "bawdy" traditional opera in the early 1960s, sometimes in the company of Jiang Qing, ignoring the fact that this was part of his job as head of the Theoretical Small Group and that even the bawdiest of Chinese operas is devoid of pornographic effect. They note insinuatingly that in the mid-1960s, when Kang helped Mao launch the Cultural Revolution, he was "aided by several women, including



KANG SHENG, FROM THE *CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY OF KANG SHENG*, 1982

his wife and the ever present Jiang Qing and a university lecturer notorious for her sexual opportunism"—a woman who, like many Chinese, had divorced her spouse when he was labeled a rightist and who later married a highly placed cadre twenty years her senior.

The Claws of the Dragon often embroiders on the bare framework of Kang's curriculum vitae, which in many spots is all the *Critical Biography* provides. This makes the book slow-moving, as we are treated to architectural detail on cities in which Kang lived, or accounts of historical events in which he played no direct role. The authors attribute states of mind to Kang without evidence. He is described as infuriated, fearful, carefully concealing his jealousy; as sensing, appreciating, enjoying; as being inspired by the exploits of traditional Chinese spymasters. His consistent and sometimes risky support for Mao's shifting line is portrayed as opportunism, part of "his quest for the unholy grail of total power."

If we are to have an imaginary Kang, I prefer a less banal one. Not knowing Kang's mind, I prefer to imagine it as Hannah Arendt imagined her totalitarians, as the mind of a fanatical ideologue who believed that all things are possible. When Kang justifies the brutality of the Cultural Revolution as a small price to pay for China's attempt to remake human nature, Byron and Pack see only nonsense. One might instead see the anti-utilitarianism typical of totalitarian ideologies. It was an ideology not generated by Kang, but created by Mao and voiced at different times by the entire Chinese Communist leadership.

Some of the main Maoist techniques of terror as an instrument of rule were perfected during the Yan'an Rectification Movement of 1942-44. Byron and Pack follow the *Critical Biography* in blaming the mass-meeting denunciations, arrests, tortures, and executions on Kang. They leave Mao, the progenitor and the beneficiary of the movement, in the background, ignore the collective involvement of the rest of the Party leadership (some of whom are still in power), and overlook the complicity of the victims, without which the vortex of hysteria could not have been generated.

In any case, the Rectification Movement fits Byron and Pack's thesis poorly. It marked a shift from secret, professional anti-espionage work to the use of public spy hysteria as a tool to ensnare thousands of innocent victims and frighten masses of people into total compliance with the new ideology of "Mao Zedong Thought." For Kang it marked the end of whatever independent power he had and his enlistment as a loyal tool of Mao.

To say that Kang "used the security organs to turn China into a chamber of horrors" is thus erroneous in three ways. First, his victims were concentrated among the Party and intellectual elite, not the whole of China. Second, the terror that swept both the elite and the entire population was not Kang's creation but that of Mao and the Party apparatus, though Kang played his part in spurring the process along. Third and most important, the terror was not the product of the security organs, but primarily of other institutions in Mao's system of rule.

Mao's system was totalitarian, but it was not a "police state," as Byron and Pack call it. In a police state, the political police become a separate organization, more powerful than the regular police, the military, or the Party organization.

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They operate without legal restriction, serve as the primary pillar of the regime, and have direct access to the leader. One thinks of Stalin's KGB, Hitler's SS, the Iranian Savak, Saddam Hussein's Mukhabarat, or the former South Korean Central Intelligence Agency. China had no similar organization. The Party never lost political control over the Ministry of Public Security, and its minister never ranked among the top figures of the regime. The Party's internal investigatory and disciplinary organs were independent from the police. So far as is known, these organs concentrated on intraparty and overseas intelligence work rather than domestic security, although information on them is extremely scarce. Under Mao, the military and rural and factory militias also served important security roles.

The huge bureaucracy of the Public Security Ministry reaches from the central government down to each neighborhood and village. Much of its work is public and non-political: traffic policing, household registration, criminal investigations, fire fighting. Until 1983 it also ran the huge network of prisons and labor camps (since shifted to the Ministry of Justice), which is described in Harry Hong-da Wu's important book *Laogai—The Chinese Gulag*, just published by Westview. A prisoner of conscience for nineteen years, Wu collected his information both during his imprisonment and during several risky return trips disguised as a Chinese-American businessman, one of them reported on "60 Minutes." Besides providing unique detail on the organization and distribution of the camps and on life inside them, Wu incidentally provides proof of the export of labor camp products to the United States and other markets.

Like police anywhere, the Chinese police engage in some amount of surveillance, opening of mail, tapping of telephones, and infiltration of political groups, though not with great efficiency. But by far the major part of the job of political surveillance in Mao's time was performed by the hierarchy of work units—factories, communes, schools, neighborhood committees, military companies—in which most people were fixed for their entire careers. Each unit was dominated by its Party secretary and controlled almost all aspects of its members' lives. The Party apparatus and the security department within each unit took responsibility for the political lives of its members, as well as for most criminal problems, and maintained links with the local police. (This helps to explain China's extremely low crime statistics, because they include only those cases that get beyond the boundaries of the work unit and enter the regular police and judicial system.) The police were free to direct their attention to special targets, to organizations outside of work units, to circles of intellectuals, students, and workers in larger cities, to foreigners with whom Chinese citizens might have contact.

Political terror was delivered mostly through the unit. Terror commonly took the form not of jackboots on the stairs and the knock on the door, but a summons to a unit political study meeting. The lifelong dissident Ni Yuxian, for example, constantly ran afoul of the regime. As Anne F. Thurston describes in her recent account of his life, *A Chinese Odyssey* (Scribner's), Ni's oppressors were the political instructor of his high school class, his company commander and political instructor in the military, Party officials in the college he attended, the worker propaganda team both in his college and in a factory he worked in, Red guards, and factory militia—in other words, control mechanisms within the unit. When Ni, like millions of others, was incarcerated during the Cultural Revolution, it was not in the prison system but in his own unit's "cow shed" (a broom closet, spare room, outhouse, or lavatory). He was never arrested by the police until after Mao's death, when he hung a wall poster on the side of one of Shanghai's major hotels.

Kang's trade was not mass terror but intraparty terror. As the *Critical Biography* states with outrage, "Those he harmed were not ordinary people." (Kang also had links to some Red Guard groups during the Cultural Revolution. In Beijing and elsewhere, Red Guards may have been used occasionally both by special case groups and by the police to carry out searches or arrests, but almost nothing is known of this relationship, and *The Claws of the Dragon* does little to clarify it.)

Perhaps it was precisely because China lacked a highly developed and autonomous secret police apparatus, and relied so heavily for security on the Party hierarchy in the units, that Mao and his allies had to turn to extraordinary methods in order to purge that very hierarchy. Kang's persecutions in the 1960s were conducted largely through entities called "special case groups." These were ad hoc groups of investigators, authorized by the Mao-controlled Party center to investigate particular suspects. Their task was not to eliminate victims, but to conduct extensive investigations so that a plausible, if false, case could be put together to justify punishment—just as was done by the special case group that produced the

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material for the *Critical Biography*. Many persecutions and tortures of secondary people had no other goal than to collect damaging information on major Party figures. Whether police were among the case group members, and whether the groups had organizational links to the police, remain unknown, although it is plausible that the case groups borrowed professional staff from the police.

With the collapse of the old control mechanisms under Deng Xiaoping's liberalizing reforms, China has come to resemble a classic police state more rather than less. Agencies dealing with counterespionage and border security were removed from the Ministry of Public Security to form a Ministry of State Security. Deng separated some military units involved in internal security to form the People's Armed Police (PAP). Elite counterterror and civil unrest units were reportedly established and received training in Eastern Europe. After Tiananmen, money was poured into the PAP to improve its technical surveillance capabilities, and control over it was shifted from the Ministry of Public Security to the more pivotal Central Military Commission. As work units have increasingly refused to inform on their members or to conduct effective political campaigns, police surveillance and illegal police detentions have increased.

Not every totalitarian state is a police state, and not every head of party security is a Beria. So far from being Mao's evil genius, the progenitor of the Cultural Revolution, or a man more interesting than Mao himself, Kang Sheng could have said in his defense what his colleague, Jiang Qing, said at her trial: "I was Chairman Mao's dog. When he said bite, I bit."

ANDREW J. NATHAN is professor of political science at Columbia University and the author most recently of *China's Crisis* (Columbia University Press).

Something Wild

BY ANITA DESAI

Sleepwalker in a Fog by Tatyana Tolstaya translated by Jamey Gambrell

(Knopf, 192 pp., $19)

That it is virtually impossible to read a book by a Russian author without applying to it all one's preconceptions about the state of the Soviet Union and all one's acquaintance with Russian literature was proved by the reviews that Tatyana Tolstaya received for her earlier collection of short stories, *On the Golden Porch*. Mention of writers as disparate as Chekhov, Gogol, and Bulgakov seemed inescapable: a heavy weight to hang around the neck of any new young writer, but to some extent it is justified. Tolstaya creates odd, eccentric characters and leaves them stranded in some piney dacha or on the edges of some sad city in the Chekhovian style. She has the same inclination as Gogol to exaggerate their oddities into monstrous proportions, while her language and her imagination combine like a pair of coach horses to whisk her into magical flights of fancy in the manner of Bulgakov. One could throw in *Oblomov*'s sublime inaction and helplessness, and why not Ilf and Petrov's gift for wringing laughter out of the dreariest Soviet reality?

But this would end up making Tolstaya sound like a Russian bag lady who pieced together her stories by picking up scraps of paper in the streets of Moscow and Leningrad and padding herself with them against the Russian winter. Nothing could be more unfair to her: her language is so fresh, so ebullient, so lacking in anything worn or borrowed, that it gives her stories the quality of surprise contained in the first cuckoo's call or the first catkin on a willow bough in spring. Although she has made her subject the odd ones out of Russian society, the sad left-outs or left-behinds of even the closest communal living, and although she has a wicked way with the grotesque and the unsightly, what her short stories chiefly display is her delight in variety and disparity, in the chance and change and charge of life. The rushed, windborne language and the racing, airy imagination join hands and fly up into the sky, and there make a picture as exhilarating as that of a kite in a windy March sky.

It can make one gasp for breath and long to sit down for a stretch. There are stories in which all the characters, ideas, and images seem to go off in so many different directions that one feels the impulse to clutch at them and bring them together. The novella "Limpopo" takes as its motif the unlikely figure of Dr. Doolittle—"and Dr. Doolittle ran all that day, and only one word would he say: 'Limpopo! Limpopo! Limpopo!' " Tolstaya adds:

> Everyone's running, running away from himself or in search of himself: Odysseus runs endlessly, spinning and marking time in the small bowl of the Mediterranean Sea; and the three sisters are moving to Moscow, motionlessly and eternally, like in a nightmare, moving their six legs, running in place...

and ends, "Moscow, Limpopo, the town of R. or the island of Ithaca—isn't it all the same?"

So we have the luckless and agitated poet Lyonechka, whose obituaries ("Baby Peter played with matches/ Now he's up in heaven fair/Where bananas grow in batches/Baby Peter, hear our prayer!") go as unappreciated as the recipes he concocts for a woman's day-book calendar (the one for May salad begins: "Let's be frank—there ain't nothin' to eat"), and who falls dolefully in love with black Judy who has come from Africa to study veterinary science but, before she can catch sight of a single animal, catches pneumonia and dies, so failing to give birth, as had been hoped, to another Pushkin. We also have Spiridonov, who had crowns fitted on his rotten old teeth and found "the variety of metals in his middle-aged mouth created a rare and marvelous effect: Spiridonov himself began to receive radio broadcasts without any supplementary appliances. Soft tangos floated out of him, distant foreign voices and prayers, soccer matches howled, raging who knows where." And there is Uncle Zhenya, who goes to Africa and is eaten by a lion in a zoo.

All provide Tolstaya's imagination the opportunity to run riot, to rampage through tropical forests, weird deserts, and Arctic zones. But when she sets her characters down in the town of R., where a team of demented bureaucrats is preparing for an official visit from the Great Tulumbass tribe and the field shifts to the satiric, then the long vines and tendrils of the surrealistic enfold and smother it and become so fanciful and long-winded that their seed is scattered everywhere—and nowhere—too light and inconsequential to be felt as even a pinprick. By refusing to focus on any of the characters, and by giving all

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their actions and the consequences thereof equal importance or unimportance, everything becomes equally weighty—or weightless. The language, too, by being so prodigal, loses point and becomes submerged in sheer mass.

Here one feels Tolstaya's craft to be badly in need of form and structure that could contain it and give it direction and a point. Lacking those, it cannot stand comparison with Gogol's *The Nose* or *The Overcoat.* One sees that satire and surrealism do not always go together, that they can actually defeat each other if they are not controlled and mastered.

In the other long story in the collection, "Sleepwalker in a Fog," she again allows the hop-skip-and-jump style of her prose to whisk her three characters off their feet and into the land of dreams and nightmares: Denisov, who is troubled by the unconvincing existence of Australia; Lora, his love who cannot stop talking; and her old father, who sleepwalks into the woods and disappears. Here too we hear the despairing call: "Limpopo! Limpopo! Limpopo!" and whole continents seem adrift, torn out by their roots from the ocean depths in search of other positions, while the characters lack roots altogether and are constantly in danger of soaring beyond the reach of gravity.

The less ambitious stories in the collection are more structured. They display a greater sense of those familiar Russian roots and, in the conventional style, are built usually around one character, often Chekhovian in his or her sad helplessness, overcome by the sense of time being out of joint. In "The Moon Came Out," Natasha feels that she should be slim and gray-eyed, a sylph who inhabits midsummer meadows and birch groves, but she is actually a fat and shapeless schoolteacher who lives in a communal apartment every bit as dreary as anti-Soviet propaganda could ever construct. One fling with an out-of-town shopper—romance among the shopping queues and counters that make up life in Moscow—and then: silence, "nothing could be heard but the din of passing life." In "Night," a boy considered a "retard" rebels momentarily against Mamochka's protective regime, steals some coins to buy an ice cream cone, but, overcome by terror, comes back, whipped, to the steamy kitchen and the soft-boiled egg. Indulgent Mamochka lets him have paper and pencil, and what he writes is only "Night. Night. Night. Night. Night"—his version of "Limpopo!"

In "Most Beloved," Tolstaya gives way to her propensity for nostalgia and sentimentality and writes, evidently with a sense of guilt, of a plain, dowdy, unloved governess. The nostalgia appears to be for a czarist past—"surprising trifles miraculously preserved from prerevolutionary times—statuettes, embroidered brooches, ancient cups with broken handles—treasures to take any little girl's breath away"—and the sense of guilt makes sentimentality bloom like a night-flowering blossom: "We would relish the autumn air, and laugh at everything, looking all around us eagerly for the arrival of love, which we expected any minute now—long, true love, everlasting and unique—while the love that leaned against the windowpane and watched us go was too simple and mundane for us." That sweetness, that wish to make amends, turns to ice at the end: "And fate, like a black wind flying into an open window, turned, stuck out its tongue and shouted, 'Just try and be most beloved!' and with a deafening cackle snuffed the candle out."

Fortunately, not all of Tolstaya's characters create lumps in the throat. In "The Poet and the Muse," for instance, the feckless poet Grisha escapes from Nina's energetic love—she has taken him away from his crowd of equally feckless friends to live in her antiseptic apartment, where she sets him down at a splendid desk to write but "where he cried a lot, and didn't want to eat, and didn't want to write neatly on clean paper"—by selling his skeleton for sixty rubles to the Academy of Science so that "after his death everything was exactly as he had wanted: the students joke with him, they tug at his wrist and make him dance about, or they put a white cap on his head." The dead don't necessarily molder in a grave beneath the daisies, Nina discovers.

If, as a satirist, Tolstaya shows weakness—her attacks come off as lighthearted fun, as little more than fairy games—it is because the bleakness and ugliness of the object of her satire is so often tricked out in the glamorous ruffled style of her prose and dances to the tune of laughter, not anger. But it is of course this lightheartedness—typified by the phrase "went camping in Siberia"—that is characteristic of the Russian and what has got him through the traumas of the twentieth century.

Each of these stories, whether in the realistic or the surrealistic vein, conveying nostalgia or satire, is written—dashed off is more the effect—in Tolstaya's helter-skelter manner. It is a style that rarely settles upon the mot juste, but instead strings together verbs and adjectives with the prodigality of springtime. A fair example of her style is the line: "Something babbled, rippled, tripped, slipped, snapped—behind, up above, upside down, it's vanished, it's gone!" She can on occasion compress it into a single telling phrase—Grisha the poet is "a doleful aphid," a window box is alight with "geranium lampposts," a style of painting in which the artist scratches the paint on the canvas is dubbed "nailism." At other times a most mundane object will set her off on a delighted spree—whether it is a pastry box "wherein reposed the grand, monarchical pastries Napoleon and Alexander, beside them, like Dimitry the Pretender, the despised shortbread ring, that constant of railway snack bars," or mushrooms "slippery, jumping, lip-like brown boletuses stuck with leaves, or the pale, wide russulas that crumbled like shortbread and squeaked in our hands."

This virtuoso's facility with language brings her again and again into the realm of poetry, sometimes the mad nonsense of nursery rhymes and tongue twisters—"Peter's pinching peppered pickles, pinching pecks of parsnips too; slews of Slavs have sharpened sickles, but can't figure what to do"—and sometimes the marvelously inspired play of metaphor and simile: "A rampant darkness encircles the world; incorporeal moon sugar will sift from leaf to leaf, trembling and glinting; sugar, snow, dreams, depths...." In "Most Beloved," the governess Zhenechka's task is described as drumming

> Russian grammar into the heads of ungrateful, sarcastic lazybones day after day; clearing the jungle of dense, stubborn, wily ignorance; planting the cleared terrain with shapely, grammatical trees, their spreading branches sibilant with the fuzzy suffixes of Russian participles; trimming away dry knots, grafting flowering branches into place, and gathering fallen fruit.

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In Tolstaya's case, the garden assumes mythical proportions and the harvest is bounteous.

The translator Jamey Gambrell had her work cut out for her and has tackled it with élan. Such Americanisms as calling people "guys" and interjecting a "Wow, what a romance!" or "a great gal" seem comfortable with the jaunty tone of the original. There are a few lapses into barbarism, as in "off of," and what is a "chaise *lounge*"? But these are few in this gorgeous, intricate, wildly rampaging Russian garden in summer bloom.

ANITA DESAI is the author most recently of *Baumgartner's Bombay* (Penguin).

The Flight into Sickness

BY GERALD WEISSMANN

From Paralysis to Fatigue: A History of Psychosomatic Illness in the Modern Era by Edward Shorter

(Free Press, 419 pp., $24.95)

As the founders of humanism and the Enlightenment discovered, those who write histories of folly can expect to enrage the foolish. We should not be surprised, therefore, that Edward Shorter's splendid history of psychosomatic illness in the modern era has evoked cries of foul play from fans of today's diseases of fashion: fibromyalgia ("pains all over"), total food allergy, irritable bowel and chronic fatigue syndromes. Nor should we be surprised that a book that debunks not only imaginary paralyses of the past but also the fancied fatigues of the present might cause one harried reviewer to call Shorter's "controversial" book "dogmatic" and a "hodgepodge." But the book is none of the above. It is an elegant work of cultural history.

Few folks of literary bent have trouble accepting the bogus nature of all those nineteenth-century fits of fainting, hysterical palsies, or lifelong withdrawals to bedroom or attic. But fewer are willing to accept that many conditions in fashion today (fatigue, food allergy, environmental hypersensitivity) are inflicted not by chemicals or microbes, but by daggers of the mind. In this belief they are encouraged by the rabble of my profession. For ever since doctors raised blisters and plied cauteries to cure spinal irritation in the mid-nineteenth century, the compliance of the foolish patient has been exceeded only by the zeal of the foolish physician. In his generous, sympathetic book, Shorter chronicles the lamentable history of that *folie à deux*.

The foolishness seems to be getting worse recently, says Shorter, referring to the paradigm shift from "spinal irritation" to "chronic fatigue." "Although the amplification of normal bodily symptoms and phobias about disease have existed in all times and places," he writes, "it is this delusional clinging to the belief in a given illness that marks the last decades of the twentieth century." Shorter points out that in the nineteenth century patients willingly accepted the doctor's diagnosis, correct or not. These days patients remain happy in their self-diagnosis of chronic fatigue or other syndromes whether or not the doctor agrees. If the first or second doctor does not, they shop around for one more compliant; and then they go on to form support groups of the like-minded. Shorter begins his history with the most fashionable disease of the nineteenth century, citing Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes's advice to the graduating students of Bellevue Hospital (now NYU) in 1871:

> Some shrewd old doctors have a few phrases always on hand for patients who will insist on knowing the pathology of their complaints.... I have known the term "spinal irritation" to serve well on such occasions.

Shorter might also have quoted Holmes's lament, later in the same address:

> There is nothing [patients] will not do, there is nothing they have not done to recover their health and save their lives. They have submitted to be half-drowned in water, and half-choked with gases, to be buried up to their chins in earth, to be seared with hot irons like galley-slaves, to be crimped with knives, like codfish, to have needles thrust into their flesh and bonfires kindled on their skin, to swallow all sorts of abominations, and to pay for all this, as if to be singed and scalded were a costly privilege, as if blisters were a blessing, and leeches were a luxury.

Shorter documents that the bulk of patients subjected to these remedies for aches and pains turned out to be women. This folly persists today: "In a survey of the symptoms of 113,000 patients seen in 106 general practices in 1955-56 in England and Wales, 92 percent more women than men complained of 'debility and undue fatigue.' " A review of recent textbooks and medical journals persuades me that between 85 percent and 95 percent of sufferers from fibromyalgia, total food allergy, and chronic fatigue syndrome are women. Shorter's history confirms the notion, tawdry but true, that women in pain are everywhere hassled by men with promises. It also teaches us that a doctoral degree in medicine is no protection against unconscionable behavior.

This book offers disheartening evidence that the medical profession, which until recently had reserved its ranks for males, has been beating up on female patients. Shorter does not claim to be the first to make this accusation. According to the feminist criticism of conventional medicine, a system of diagnosis and treatment developed by dead, white, European males cannot achieve "gender neutrality." I have usually taken comfort in the obvious response that DWEMS have given us habeas corpus and digitalis, cantatas and penicillin, "Leaves of Grass" and prednisone. But Shorter's careful study has persuaded me that it is not only feminist critics who can trace the foolish practice of today to its roots in medical misogyny.

By means of telling examples, Shorter convinces us that social norms shape medical fashion, and that medical fashion in turn shapes the symptoms that patients select. The unconscious mind, writes Shorter, "desires to be taken seriously and not be ridiculed. It will therefore strive to present symptoms that always seem, to the surrounding culture, legitimate evidence of organic disease." As a result, "Most of the symptoms ... have always been known to Western society, although they have occurred at different times with different frequencies: Society does not invent symptoms; it retrieves them from the symptom pool." The symptoms are often real, not invented; but the important point is that the patient must present symptoms that the medical culture will not reject.

No doubt, a number of patients with fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome are afflicted by an as yet uncharacterized somatic response to a chemical or virus: new candidates propose themselves weekly. But real microbes eventually cause diseases that really

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hurt: they kill, maim, or provoke detectable body ill. Which is precisely what psychosomatic diseases such as fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome cannot, though they can cause all kinds of pain.

What I find quite embarrassing about Shorter's analysis of medical symptom-shaping is how close he hits to home. He has made me realize that for almost a decade I seem to have been sold a bill of goods by my fellow rheumatologists as to the diagnosis of "fibromyalgia." The victims of this will-o'-the-wisp syndrome happen to be female (85 to 95 percent), and Shorter has convinced me that well-meaning male physicians, for at least a century and a half, have been committing women to pernicious remedies for complaints that nowadays we would call fibromyalgia. Indeed, only its name has changed. What to the nineteenth century appeared as "spinal irritation," or "Charcot's hysteria," or "neurasthenia," has returned in our day as "fibromyalgia," as "irritable bowel syndrome," as "chronic fatigue syndrome." The pain is as real for the tired women of today as it was for those palsied by spinal irritation yesterday. The symptom is never "invented" by the patient, it is a marker of a deeper hurt, of which only the surface display has changed over time. Shorter argues persuasively that observation is constant while labels change and folly persists.

In 1821 Dr. R.P. Player of Mansbury observed that patients, when he pressed on certain vertebrae, reported pain, and that "in many instances patients are surprised at the discovery of tenderness in a part, of whose implication in disease they had not the least suspicion." And in 1828 Thomas Brown of Glasgow wrote the first complete account of "spinal irritation," which was a "morbid affection" often seen in young females. Its symptoms were painful, tender spots (beneath the breast, say, or under the sternum) of which the patient had not been aware until the examination. The morbid sensibility was chiefly in the skin: "The patient for the most part flinches more when the skin is even slightly pinched than when pressure is made on the vertebrae themselves. The pain is in the majority of cases more severe than in those of real vertebral diseases."

The diagnosis of this disorder reached its apogee in 1886 in a book called *Spinal Irritation* by William Alexander Hammond, a former Surgeon General of the Union Armies (court-martialed in wartime by a coven of bureaucrats) and one of the founders of the NYU Postgraduate Medical School. Hammond, who claimed to have discovered the disease in 1870, found "multiple tender spots" in cases of spinal irritation, and ascribed some of the cases to sexual excess or masturbation on the part of his female patients. In keeping with his contemporaries, he advocated treatment with "counterirritants" such as dry heat, scalding water, or croton oil extracts. Again, in the manner of his contemporaries, he failed to record the outcome of his therapies.

Shorter describes the transformation of "spinal irritation" to "hysteria," citing such late nineteenth-century examples as Jean-Martin Charcot, the neurologic lion of Paris. Shorter demolishes Charcot's public performances at the Salpêtrière, where a generation of dazed, sick women put on public displays for Charcot's audience of fashionable voyeurs. Axel Munthe, a student of Charcot's, reported that

> these stage performances of the Salpêtrière before the public of Tout Paris were nothing but an absurd farce, a hopeless muddle of truth and cheating. Some of these subjects were no doubt real somnambulists faithfully carrying out in a waking state the various post-hypnotic suggestions made during sleep. Many of them were mere frauds, knowing quite well what they were expected to do, delighted to perform various tricks in public, cheating both doctors and audience with the amazing cunning of the hystériques. They were always ready to "piquer une attaque" of Charcot's classical grande hystérie, arc-en-ciel and all, or to exhibit his famous three stages of hypnotism: lethargy, catalepsy, somnambulism, all invented by the Master and hardly ever observed outside the Salpêtrière.

A student of Charcot, Dr. Jean-Albert Pitres of Bordeaux, found that attacks of *grande hystérie* took their origin in—you guessed it—certain tender spots. In cases of hysteria, Pitres was able to define a "demarcated spasmogenic zone" over his patients' bodies (the small of the back, both armpits, and the bottom of the sternum) as well as over the ovary.

Sigmund Freud, who had traveled to the Salpêtrière in the 1880s to sit at Charcot's feet, was also a devotee of the tender-spot doctrine. He described hysteria in terms that might astound not only feminists. His patient Elizabeth von R. had such a spot; and when Freud touched a hyperalgesic skin spot, the fräulein cried out and he could not help thinking that it was as though she were "having a voluptuous tickling sensation; her face flushed, she threw back her head and shut her eyes and her body bent backwards." Another of Freud's patients, Mrs. K., had in 1895 cramplike pains in her chest. "In her case," Freud told his friend Wilhelm Fliess in 1895, "I have invented a strange therapy of my own: I search for sensitive areas, press on them, and thus provoke fits of shaking which free her." His patient's spasmogenic zones, originally in her face, shifted to two points on her left chest wall, identical, Freud said, to his own spasmogenic points. (Before we rush Freud to the wall for what we know to be the *real* meaning of all this, we might recall that the method we are using to arrive at our conclusions was devised by him.)

Misreading Our Lives

The story of which we speak is, perhaps,
not even a story; rather, it is
the semblance of a story, just a smudged
invitation to help you pass the time
as you travel quickly from paragraph
to paragraph mispunctuating as you
go, taking the meanings and contorting
them into strange lumps that will lie heavy
in your hand. Fix these images in your
mind, so if you should ever find yourself

on a street corner, say, in hard light, you
will remember *that was it, a picture*
for their suffering. But in other times—
there will be others—completely forget
the plot, that it is barely linear,
hardly contained by the margins, that even
the gutters run with words. You will find then
the story is really an old story,
worn with tears and stains and brittle pages
that shudder as your hands pass over them,

so that you might wish it were someone else's
story, that you could inscribe the fly leaf
with a stranger's name, or conceal the depths
of your ownership in boxes. Give it away,
this anxiety, for the words are hardly
there. They are somewhere else, perhaps, obscured
by the absence of light where the words are
no darker than the page. Don't be afraid
to pull the sheets higher in that moment,
to imagine a burning light when it happens.

SHAWN STURGEON

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You deserve a factual look at...

Those "West Bank" Settlements

Are they *really* the "greatest obstacle to peace"

Not too long ago, our Secretary of State James Baker made the astonishing comment that Israeli settlements in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") were the greatest obstacle to peace in the Middle East. *Could Mr. Baker possibly be right? It's a serious accusation and it deserves examination.*

What are the facts?

■ In order to gain perspective, some thumbnail history may be in order. Large numbers of Jews have been living in these territories since biblical times – without interruption. Most of the Arabs living there are in fact relative newcomers. "Palestine" is the entire area now covered by Israel, including Judea/Samaria (the so-called "West Bank") *and* what is now the Kingdom of Jordan. It originally also included the Golan Heights, which later, in an agreement between England and France, were ceded to France, and to Syria as the successor in possession. In 1922, contrary to the requirements of the League of Nations Mandate, the British severed the entire area east of the Jordan River and gave it to the Hashemites as reward for their assistance in World War I. Thus, fully 75% of Palestine, all of which under the Mandate and under the terms of the Balfour Declaration was meant to be a homeland for the Jewish people, was lost for that purpose. Only the area west of the Jordan River was left for Jewish settlement.

■ In 1947, after decades of strife between Arabs and Jews, the British decided that they had enough and announced that they would relinquish the Mandate. The United Nations stepped in and proposed a partition plan under which the country (west of the River) was to be divided into respective Arab and Jewish areas. Jerusalem was to be an internationalized city. The Jews accepted the plan; the Arabs refused it out of hand. In 1948, on the twice truncated territory allotted to them by the United Nations, the Jews declared their independence, and the state of Israel was born. On the same day, six Arab armies invaded the new-born state. In what can be described as an almost biblical miracle, the Jews defeated the six Arab armies. When an armistice was finally secured, however, TransJordan remained in possession of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem; Egypt remained in possession of the Gaza Strip. TransJordan promptly renamed itself Jordan.

■ Once in possession of the "West Bank" and East Jerusalem, the Jordanians promptly proceeded to expel all Jews and systematically to desecrate and to destroy most Jewish sacred places, cemeteries and houses of worship. No Jews, regardless of whether they were Israelis, Americans or citizens of any other country, were allowed into the "West Bank" or East Jerusalem, the locale of the Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism. In 1967, Abdel Nasser of Egypt, joined by the same array of Arab armies that had tried to destroy Israel in 1948, launched another war against Israel "to drive the Jews into the sea" and into oblivion, once and for all. The Israelis pre-empted and utterly defeated the combined Arab might in the 6-Day War, one of the greatest military victories in history. When the dust of war settled, the Israelis had not only retained their national territory, but had repossessed (not occupied) the territories of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), the eastern part of Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the vast Sinai Peninsula.

It is clear from this abbreviated history that the Israeli claim to the "West Bank" is at least as strong as that of the Arabs. It's only by dint of constant repetition that the world has come to think of these territories as "occupied Arab land". About 100,000 Jews now live in these territories. And why shouldn't they? Why should the Arab countries and the "West Bank" be the only places in the whole wide world where Jews are not allowed to live? How can 100,000 Jews living among 700,000 Arabs be the "greatest threat to peace"? How can Secretary Baker get so exercised and consider a new settlement of a few mobile homes on some barren Judean hills as the "greatest threat to peace", when he seems to be oblivious and totally unconcerned about the unrelenting hostility of the Arab countries, the de facto incorporation of Lebanon by Syria, the Scuds and chemical weapons still remaining in Iraq, and the relentless and ominous build-up of Syria's missile forces?

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The remedy for all these myalgias, for all this fatigue and pain, was a century-long, concentrated attack by male doctors on the female reproductive tract. Shorter documents that over half of the articles dealing with oophorectomy (removal of the ovaries) in 1889 described it as a treatment for mental disease; hysteria had traditionally been attributed to disorders of the womb or ovaries. Other modes of therapy for spinal irritation or hysteria included cauterization of the clitoris, hysterectomy, curettage, cupping, electroshock, arsenic, and so on. Indeed, it was not until the end of the century that objections were raised to these "good faith" measures. Dr. Playfair of London argued in 1907:

> Nothing can be more deplorably bad for a nervous, emotional woman, whose general health is at low ebb, than to have her reproductive organs stimulated by vaginal examinations repeated two or three times a week, pessaries constantly introduced for "a slight displacement," the cervix frequently cauterized, or the endometrium [uterine lining] curetted, and the like; and yet these are things one incessantly sees.... No doubt it is generally done in good faith; but the results are often disastrous.

By World War I, "neurasthenia" had replaced "hysteria" as the diagnosis of choice in the ache and pain field. Sure enough, tender points were a feature of this syndrome as well. Shorter quotes David Drummond, senior physician at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Newcastle, writing in 1907:

> We employ the term "neurasthenic" in a very loose and certainly most comprehensive way. It is made to include the north and south poles and all the intermediate latitudes of functional nervous disease. Anything between the highly strung, interesting, but irritable young lady who abhors the designation "nervous," and is grossly insulted by the slightest hint that she is hysterical when she complains of an abiding cold spot between her shoulders in her spinal column that nothing relieves, and the stupid, depressed, ever-complaining and, indeed heartbreaking "lie-abed," a lifelong trouble to herself and her friends ...

But the diagnostic fancies of pressure points and tender spots followed by counterirritants and nostrums are not limited to the past. Indeed, Shorter has prompted me to dip into the fibromyalgia literature of today. Thus, the February 1990 issue of *Arthritis and Rheumatism* contained the "Criteria for the Classification of Fibromyalgia" of a subcommittee of the American College of Rheumatology (an organization that a

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few years ago already showed questionable judgment by electing me as its president). The single illustration in the fibromyalgia article is based on Regnault's painting of the *Three Graces*, on the nude bodies of whom the authors have superimposed dots that localize the characteristic "tender spots" of the disease. The presence of eleven or more of these eighteen "specific tender point sites" together with widespread pain in the absence of radiographic or lab abnormalities suffice for the classification of fibromyalgia.

The authors elicited pain at the magic spots in their mainly female patients either by means of a pain-metering machine or "palpation with the pulp of the thumb or the first 2 or 3 fingers at a pressure of approximately 4 kilos." Pain was graded in a fashion that has not changed since the days of the cautery:

> The following system for grading the severity of tender points (18) was used; 0=no pain; 1 (mild)=complaint of pain without grimace, flinch, or withdrawal; 2 (moderate)=pain plus grimace or flinch; 3 (severe)=pain plus marked flinch or withdrawal; 4 (unbearable)=patient "untouchable," withdraws without palpation. A grimace was a "facial expression." A flinch was defined as "a slight body movement." A marked flinch was defined as an "exaggerated body movement." Withdrawal was defined as "moving the body part away from the examiner." "Tender" was not interpreted as pain.

One of the co-authors of the *A&R* article on fibromyalgia was Dr. Hugh Smythe of Toronto, an eminent and thorough clinician. In his textbook chapter on fibromyalgia, Smythe suggests a variety of treatments for this syndrome under the general title "Counterirritant Therapy." These include "a wide variety of popular or unusual therapies, including massage, heat, liniments, steroid injections, ethyl chloride spray, and acupuncture," all of which he believes to be helpful in relieving pain. He states (with tongue in cheek?): "Factors influencing a choice of counterirritant technique will include simplicity, safety, and availability and economy on one hand and maximal placebo effect on the other." Now, since women, and not men, will be subject to these measures, not only for the therapy of fibromyalgia but also of "irritable bowel" and of "chronic fatigue syndrome" (the CDC criteria for which differ very slightly from those for fibromyalgia), one might ask whether historical prejudice or medical science is at work.

Edward Shorter properly pleads that patients who subscribe to the diseases of fashion really suffer from their illness—in body or mind or both—and therefore deserve not only the attention, but also the compassion, of doctors. He summarizes:

> Thus this book does not view patients with "somatoform" symptoms as bizarre objects but as individuals who enjoy the dignity that all disease confers; our task is rather to understand why the kinds of psychosomatic symptoms that patients perceive change so much over the ages.

The deep human need for a flight into sickness has remained constant over the years. What has changed is the recent choice of fatigue (a sensory symptom) over paralysis (a motor symptom). Our understanding is well served by Shorter's approach: he has written a history of sensibility rather than a history of events. I agree with his notion that this shift of sensibility reflects in part the changing role of women over the last century. Symptoms of motor paralysis in the days of female passivity have been replaced by symptoms of sensory fatigue in our days of female action. The shift, I would add after Shorter, may also reflect a deep Freudian response to the sexual plagues of the time; whatever syphilitic paralysis signified in the nineteenth century, the chronic sensory fatigue of AIDS may be telling us today. The diseases that frighten us most are the ones that affect our deepest selves. Paralysis may be a disease of nineteenth-century authenticity; fatigue may be a symptom of twentieth-century sincerity.

Shorter has previously given us remarkable histories of the family and of the changing role of doctors vis-à-vis patients. This time he has outdone himself. I would rather have my students read this book than several dozen journal articles on fibromyalgia. (*From Paralysis to Fatigue* is now on the required reading list of my training program.) It reminds us that the history of medicine may be more instructive than its current dogmas. This eloquent historian points out where we have been wrong, suggests why we are wrong, and predicts how we will be wrong; and he teaches us that while folly persists, the wise will find steady work in its description.

GERALD WEISSMANN is professor of medicine and director of the Division of Rheumatology at New York University Medical Center. His most recent book is *The Doctor with Two Heads* (Vintage).

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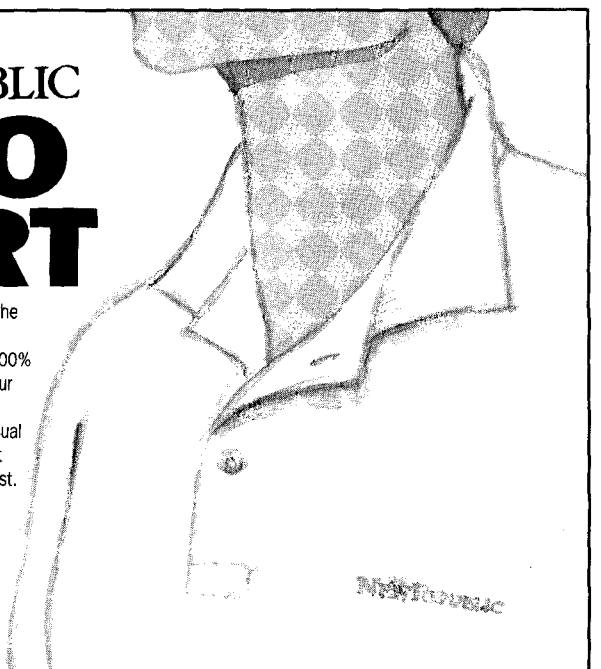

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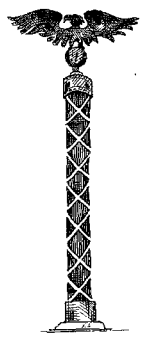
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Speed camp

"FIRST OF ALL, YOUR HONOR, THE stop sign was way over on the right behind a parked car, and I was looking for a street on the left, and it was dark and drizzling and there was no stop line and I was driving very slowly and I used to be a Boy Scout . . . " As I sat in traffic court awaiting arraignment and rehearsing my defense in my mind, one thing became surpassingly clear: I was going to be convicted. That's why when an assistant prosecutor announced to the courtroom that the town of Alexandria would dismiss charges against any offenders choosing to enroll in a state-certified traffic safety course, I jumped at the opportunity. In so doing, I later learned, I became a participant in one of the fastest-growing trends in traffic law enforcement nationwide. The programs are mostly "voluntary," but motorists protective of their insurance premiums tend to find the courses an offer they can't refuse. (Typically, points are removed from a driver's record upon course completion.) As a result, traffic schools are now a multimillion-dollar business.

NOWHERE IS THIS FECUNDITY more colorfully in evidence than in California. Thanks to a statewide traffic-school certification process of singular laxity, a violator remanded to remedial driver's ed can choose to attend, among other academies, the Laff N Learn Comedy Traffic School, Whee-l Make U Laff Great Comedians, S-Mile N Giggle Funny Comedians, Lettuce Amuse U, Laughs Galore-U Won't Snore, and, for the impecunious offender, the Comedy For Less-No Work-No Test Traffic School. Non-comedy options include the Free Chinese Food–Our Price Is Rice School, the Finally A Gay Traffic School (where a Marine training film on drinking and driving is said to be a big hit), and one called Lunch N Learn at Fine Restaurants School for Traffic Violators, where students might contemplate proper passing techniques over warm duck and morel salad and a carafe of the house chablis.

ALAS, THE STAID VIRGINIANS RESponsible for my rehabilitation into society were brooking no such irreverence. Instead, I was directed to a program called DriveSafe, Inc.: "The Graduate School of Driving." At 8 a.m. on the appointed Saturday, my fellow criminals and I shuffled despondently into the classroom and were handed a blue booklet titled "Defensive Driving Course Guide." A peppy letter on the inside front cover from a Mr. T. C. Gilchrest, president of the National Safety Council, informed us that we were about to embark on "an adventure in traffic safety awareness." Unfortunately, the remainder of the manual, a thoroughly vapid compendium of common knowledge and niggling advice, presaged something more along the lines of an adventure in narcolepsy. A typical observation from the Guide: "The greater the amount of traffic on the road, the more chance for conflict and collision." The solution? "Avoid congested routes whenever possible."



SOON ENOUGH OUR INstructor, Officer Friendly (a pseudonym), strode to the front of the room and called the class to order. Friendly was a youthful, muscular policeman, dressed in a cotton knit sweater and slacks. He began with a discussion of defensive driving techniques. Working together, the class determined that weather conditions, road conditions, vehicle condition, and driver attitude are all factors with which a defensive driver must contend. In the second hour, we differentiated between driving actions that are reasonable (swerving to avoid a collision) and those that are merely possible (driving your car into the Potomac). Next we saw a film, "It's a Jungle Out There," in which a man in a safari outfit got into an all-terrain vehicle and drove safely.

IT QUICKLY BECAME APPARENT that everything Officer Friendly was teaching us he expected us to know already; hence his fill-in-the-blanks teaching style:

FRIENDLY: Upon approaching a curve you should . . .
MEMBER OF CLASS: Slow down.
FRIENDLY: . . . because . . .
OTHER MEMBER OF CLASS: Something may be around the curve that you can't see.
FRIENDLY: And you want to be able to . . .
STILL OTHER MEMBER OF CLASS: React in time.

The fact that no actual learning was taking place mattered little to Officer Friendly or, for that matter, to the prudes at the National Safety Council. The course was apparently designed not as instruction, but as a war of attrition against our entrenched subconscious urges to drive recklessly. Friendly's job was to fire off volley after volley of mind-numbing instructions, recommendations, and remonstrations from the NSC's seemingly inexhaustible arsenal of traffic safety-related banalities in an attempt to overwhelm our fortified psychic battlements. Fortunately, mine held.

AFTER A BREAK, WE RETURNED TO the topic of collisions, and Friendly went through the animals that it is safe to collide with (horse, deer, gazelle—long spindly legs) and those to be avoided at any cost (cow, bull, stegosaurus—bulky low-riders). We talked about stop signs; we talked about intersections; we talked about the margin highway cops give speeders over the posted limit before pulling them over (ten miles per hour if they're in a good mood, five if they're grumpy). We learned the proper defensive driving technique for evading injury when your car is stalled on a railroad track with a train approaching (you guessed it). Then we saw a film, "The Defense Never Rests," in which a man dressed in a tweed coat got into a maroon van and drove safely. I guessed the ending.

THE REST OF THE DAY FLEW BY like a wounded goose, and early in the afternoon Friendly announced that he was going to give us the remaining time off for good behavior. But before we were dismissed, he continued, there was the matter of our exams to be dealt with. It suddenly occurred to me that, for the past several hours, I had been reading a novel beneath my desk and hadn't the slightest notion of what had been discussed. The mere possibility that I might flunk and be forced to repeat the course to the tune of $55 and another Saturday had me quavering in my seat—until I got my copy of the test. Here are a few of the twenty questions:

#3: Driving to save lives, money, and time in spite of the conditions around you and the action of others is: (a) perfect driving (b) safe driving (c) defensive driving.
#9: In case of running off the road onto the shoulder, your best defense is to:
(a) immediately apply all brakes including the emergency brake
(b) increase your speed and swerve to the left
(c) rely upon centrifugal force to return you to the roadway
(d) hold the wheel steady and decrease your speed gradually
#17: A collision is a complete loss unless something is gained from it.
True False

I passed.

JONATHAN BINES

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National Standards and Exams

BY ALBERT SHANKER, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

There is general recognition that students in other industrialized countries achieve at a much higher level than American students. They do better on the international examinations that allow us to make comparisons, and their school-leaving exams are more demanding than any our students face. What are these countries doing that we aren't? Of course you can't just pick up something from a foreign culture and drop it into your own, but we can learn a lot by comparing the way school systems work in other countries with what goes on in ours.

There are many differences, but one of the most basic is that nearly all of these countries have national education standards. They have decided what their students need to learn, and they have developed a national curriculum and national system of tests to find out whether or not the students learn it. In some countries, the curriculum is so carefully prescribed that you could predict what math lesson a fourth grader would be studying on a given day of the year. In other countries, there is more leeway. Still, national standards mean that a student graduating from high school has achieved a certain level of knowledge.

These systems have many advantages over ours. Each of our states and 15,000 school districts is more or less doing its own thing when it comes to curriculum. Some create their own or adapt curriculums from other districts; some take ideas from here and there. So our money and efforts are spread thin, and some districts have much better curriculums than others. With national curriculums, resources and talent can be concentrated, so children in every school district can benefit from excellent materials.

There are dangers, but we have the knowledge and capacity to avoid them.

National curriculums mean that kids moving from one school district to another do not have to waste time by repeating material they already know or struggle to catch up on stuff they've missed. These curriculums also mean that you have an answer to the question of how to prepare teachers: Teach them to teach the national curriculum and test them on how well they do it. U.S. colleges and universities have no such guidance in preparing or assessing teachers. Their students will teach in different states and school districts with different curriculums. So what they get are abstract courses that most teachers say did not help them learn how to teach.

National standards and exams go hand in hand. Critics here say that testing kids won't make them work harder, but in all these countries, the national tests have important consequences. Kids know they need to work hard because test scores determine whether or not they get into university or what kind of job they get. This sounds harsh, but it is fairer than our system. Everybody knows exactly what is required to succeed, so students can work toward this goal and teachers can help them. Something similar happened here when minimum competency tests came in. Many people said they were cruel because disadvantaged kids would never be able to pass them. But millions of youngsters worked hard to do just that because they wanted a high school diploma.

Congress is considering a system of education standards and assessments for this country. It would be different from the systems I've been talking about because it would be voluntary rather than compulsory, and it would not be run by the federal government. Still, a lot of people are strongly opposed to the idea of national standards. They say our country is too diverse to get agreement on curriculum. But California has done it, and its population is as diverse as that of the U.S.

Many people are especially critical of the testing part of the proposal. They say that the exams could be more of the same standardized tests we've been trying to get away from. They also say the exams will be unfair to disadvantaged students and that any exams that have serious consequences are a bad idea. It's true that there are some real dangers. It's also true that we have the knowledge and capacity to avoid them. And if the assessments aren't exactly what we want the first time, we can work on them until they are.

There would be consequences for getting this system wrong, but there also are consequences for continuing to do things the way we are now. Our students don't know much, and no wonder. Except for the few students who hope to go to selective colleges, they don't work hard in school. And there's no reason for them to do so because they know it won't count. This is destructive for them and for our country.

We worry a great deal about how exams can damage students who fail—or who fear failing. But we don't worry at all about never teaching kids that if they work hard, they can achieve something—like mastery of a subject and a good mark on a test. If high school sports programs were run this way, football coaches would hesitate to let their teams play. What if the kids lost? And if they did let their teams take the field, they'd insist that games be played without counting any of the goals.

Congress has the opportunity to put up some money to help develop national standards and better assessments than we now have. People who predict disaster should look at how these systems work in other industrialized countries. Some of these systems are better than others, but none is a disaster, and there's no reason to believe we'd have one here. In fact, there's every reason to believe we could make such a system work.

MR. SHANKER'S COMMENTS APPEAR IN THIS AD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS. READER CORRESPONDENCE IS INVITED. ADDRESS YOUR LETTERS TO MR. SHANKER AT THE AFT, 555 NEW JERSEY AVE., N.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20001. ©1991 BY ALBERT SHANKER.

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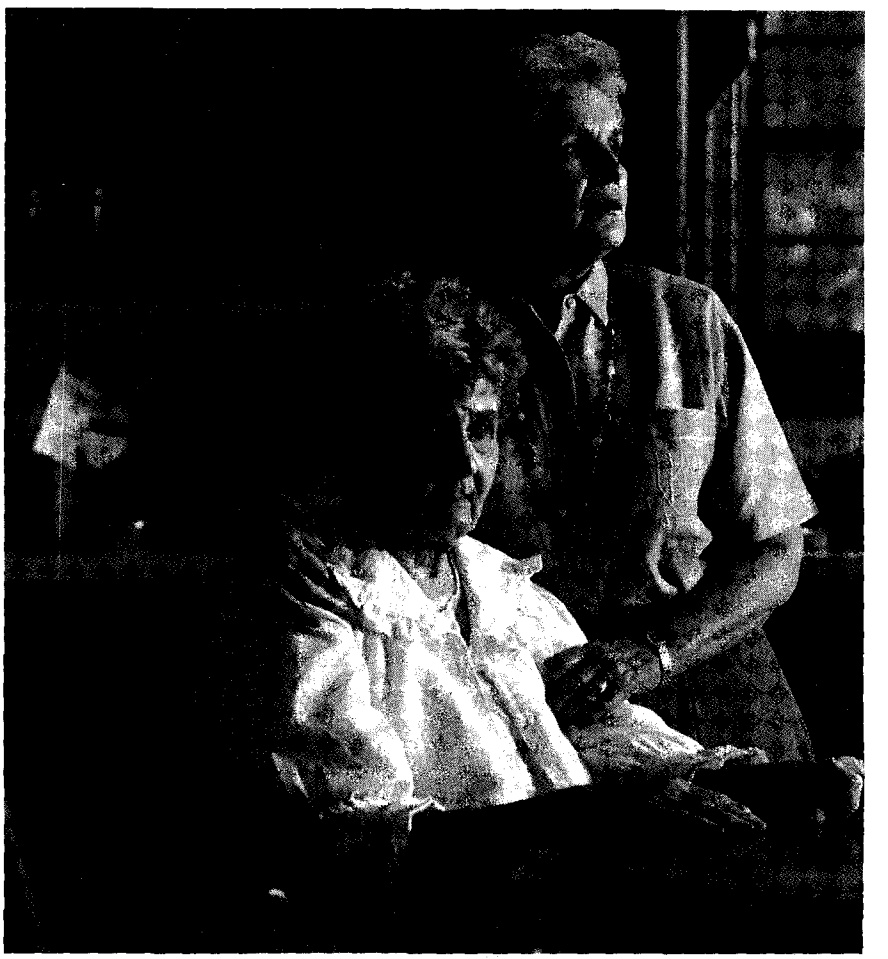
Can we arrest the disease that robs people of their minds?



Over 4 million people suffer from it, and nearly half of all nursing home patients are its victims.

It's Alzheimer's, the disease that steals a person's mind, dignity and independence, and exacts costs of over $88 billion a year for institutional and home care.

Leading the way in the search for relief from this mysterious disease is the pharmaceutical industry, which is making the nation's largest investment in drug research.

Since 1988 alone, the industry has been conducting research on over 40 medicines for Alzheimer's, and currently has 13 in test. While these efforts hold hope for breakthroughs, the process is long and difficult, with only a few of the thousands of compounds developed ever achieving success.

This exhaustive, high risk research increases the industry's cost of doing business, and in turn the price of drugs. But it also leads to the kind of discoveries that can break the grip of such an enormously costly and tragic disease like Alzheimer's.

To learn more about pharmaceutical research, and the critical role it plays in health care, call or write for our free booklet, "Good Medicine."

The Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, 1100 15th St., N.W., Box Z, Wash., D.C. 20005. 1-800-538-2692.

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